THE HERITAGE OF INDIA

INDIAN PAINTING

By

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> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

No section of the population of India can afford to neglect her ancient heritage. The treasures of knowledge, wisdom, and beauty which are contained in her literature, philosophy, art, and regulated life are too precious to be lost. Every citizen of India needs to use them, if he is to be a cultured modern Indian. This is as true of the Christian, the Muslim, the Zoroastrian as of the Hindu. But, while the heritage of India has been largely explored by scholars, and the results of their toil are laid out for us in books, they cannot be said to be really available for the ordinary man. The volumes are in most cases expensive, and are often technical and difficult. Hence this series of cheap books has been planned by a group of Christian men, in order that every educated Indian, whether rich or poor, may be able to find his way into the treasures of India's past. Many Europeans, both in India and elsewhere, will doubtless be glad to use the series.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

IT is now some ten years since this book was first written and a second edition has been called for. During this period a considerable amount of fresh material has been collected, and the study of Indian Painting has made much progress. The information thus accumulated, while amplifying appreciably our general knowledge, has affected to no great extent the main outlines of the subject. As this little book, owing to its size, is limited to these outlines, it is again issued in its original form, with the exception of a few necessary alterations.

June, 1927. P.B.

INTRODUCTION

Less than thirty years ago the West had settled down to the comfortable feeling that there was no such art as painting in India. The few publications on Indian art previous to that time distinctly state that the country is deficient in pictorial art. The acceptance of this dictum simplified matters, and made what little study there was of this subject comparatively easy. It is true, a certain number of decoratively coloured miniatures had at different times been obtained from India, but in the museums of the West these were usually catalogued as Persian, and actually sometimes as Chinese. They were not regarded as examples of fine art, or even as pictures, but generally treated as ornamental book illustrations—in other words, interesting specimens of applied art.

The reason for this state of affairs is not far to seek. The West regarded art from only one point of view—the Western point of view. Unless a picture or piece of sculpture conformed to the academic canons of the West, unless the perspective of the one or the anatomy of the other was entirely in accordance with the Western text-books on these two sciences, it was not a work of art but an Oriental 'curio.'

The acceptance of Japanese art as a form of æstheticism worthy of serious study, was the first step taken towards an appreciation of the artistic culture of the Orient. Before long it became evident that a broader view of the subject of art than that hitherto adopted was not only possible, but necessary, in the light of the qualities that speedily became

observable in the painting of the Far East. Soon academic rules were at a discount, and the more comprehensive basis from which Oriental art might be considered was an accomplished fact. The pictorial art of Japan having been recognised, it was not long before Indian painting came within the artistic horizon. The difficulty of the feeling that every picture, to be a picture, must be on canvas with a gilt frame, was also overcome, and the Buddhist frescoes and the Mughal miniatures were eventully regarded as representative and expressive of the fine art of India.

It has been said that in view of the gulf that divides the Western mind from that of the Oriental, it is a tribute to the deeply-seated nature of the æsthetic instinct, that these two differently-situated peoples have eventually met on one common plane, the plane of art. Nevertheless, even with this fact accepted, it does not follow that each looks on this subject from anything like the same mental standpoint. It is only necessary to state that while Hokusai astonished Europe (Millet and Whistler alike viewing him with admiration), in his own country of Japan he is but faintly praised. The question then arises as to which estimate is right. To indicate one of the difficulties in attempting to frame an answer, an example may be taken of the Indian picture connoisseur who will value a picture for the absorbing sentiment of its subject, overlooking its æsthetic character, which particular character the Occidental critic would unconditionally condemn. This no doubt strikes at the root of the whole matter, which is that, while the Oriental is a philosopher first and artist afterwards, the Westerner is an artist first and a philosopher afterwards. But the sympathetic appreciation of Indian art, and especially of Indian painting, which has been slowly but surely gaining ground during the last

few years, has now reached a definite stage in that movement which East and West are making towards a mutual understanding of their ideals.

Fundamentally, as in almost every aspect of the two civilisations, no true comparisons can be instituted between the art of the Orient and that of the Occident. Each starts from a different origin, aims at a different object, and arrives at a different end. It is possible, however, to define certain qualities of dissimilarity in the two arts, and by means of these to realise some of the broad distinguishing features of Indian painting.

As the painting of the West is an art of 'mass,' so that of the East is an art of 'line.' The Western artist conceives his composition in contiguous planes of light and shade and colour. He obtains his effect by 'play of surface,' by the blending of one form into another, so that decision gives place to suggestion. In Occidental painting there is an absence of definite circumscribing lines, any demarcation being felt rather than seen. On the other hand, much of the beauty of Oriental painting lies in the interpretation of form by means of a clear-cut definition, regular and decided; in other words, the Eastern painter expresses form through a convention—the convention of pure line—and in the manipulation and the quality of this line the Oriental artist is supreme. Western painting, like Western music, is communal, it is produced with the intention of giving pleasure to a number of people gathered together. Indian painting, with the important exception of the Buddhist frescoes, is individual—miniature painting that can only be enjoyed by one or two persons at a time. In its music, in its painting, and even in its religious ritual, India is largely individualistic.

Indian painting may be broadly resolved into the three

great religious divisions—Buddhist, Hindu and Muhammadan. The Hindu painting has come to be referred to as Rajput, on account of its association with Rajputana and the Hill Rajputs of the Punjab : while the Muhammadan art is referred to as Mughal, as it owed its existence to the encouragement it received from that dynasty. Buddhist and Rajput painting was symbolic in signifying the spiritual life of India ; the dominant note of both was religion, and the chief feature was mysticism. As a contrast to this, Mughal painting was frankly secular, and in character realistic and eclectic.

The aim of the Buddhist artist was to visualise the ideals of his creed, to illustrate by pictorial parables all the beautiful sentiments of the Buddhist religion. These were designed to appeal to the higher feelings of the spectator, so that, sustained by their supreme charm, the littleness of his own personality vanishes, and he becomes exalted and absorbed. The Buddhist frescoes no doubt attained this object, and by their sheer artistry elevated the individual into the actual realms of the higher beings, thus bringing him to the feet of the Master himself.

Rajput painting, while aspiring towards the same high ideals, covered a larger field. Apart from its delineation of the great religious dramas of Hinduism, in its domestic character it reflected the beliefs and customs of the common people, thus producing an artistic folklore of unusual interest. Its chief aim, however, was to present the innumerably graphic aspects of their religion to the people in a portable and popular manner, literally, for household use. This resulted in a school of miniature painting, which is an outstanding feature of the pictorial art of India.

The painting of the Mughal school exhibits the same

technical traits as the Rajput art, but is distinguished by a widely different intention. It strives after no spiritual conceptions, but embodies a genuine statement of fact. Some of the illustrative work deals with the mythical, but the Mughal miniatures are, in the main, material. Religion played no part in the artistic productions of this school. It excelled in portraiture, and in this field it subconsciously went beyond the representation of superficial facts, often recording the innermost character of the sitter in a very natural manner.

Of the Indian painter, as an individual, little is known. The artists of other countries of the East appear as actual characters, their names and systems of working and living, their personal aspirations, their eccentricities and very failings, have been handed down to posterity. It is possible to live with them and share their joys and sorrows. As an example, the Japanese painter was above everything else a Bohemian, indifferent to the ordinary conventions of society, his existence depending entirely on the course of his art. But the story of the Indian artist, if such the meagre records can be called, presents nothing tangible. The painter, whether Buddhist, Rajput, or Mughal, walks through the pages of history a somewhat elusive being. Only his pictures remain to prove that he was a man of no little character, and absorbed in his work. In these productions a certain personality is discernible, but of an abstract nature, difficult to focus as an actual individual in relation to his art.

There is sufficient evidence, however, to enable us to visualise the early Buddhist painter as an artist-priest, learned in his religion as he was in his art. His system of work was probably that which prevails in Buddhist Tibet at the present time. When it has been decided that a certain building is to be decorated, or a piece of sculpture executed, artists are

sent for from the leading religious institution, and these are retained in the monastery as part of the sacerdotal establishment until the commission is completed. For the time being they become members of the local brotherhood, and are lodged and fed as part of the priestly staff. The sculptor belonged to the same group as the painter, often one individual being master of both crafts. When the work was finished, these artists either returned to the central monastic institution, or travelled to another religious edifice which required their artistic services. Living in this way on the spot, and forming for the time a part of the community personally concerned in the building being decorated, their interest would be a real one, and their work would accordingly represent a genuine feeling of reverence for the edifice with which they were so intimately associated.

On the other hand, the Rajput painter was one of the people, a member of that guild of craftsmen which formed an essential portion of the Indian communal fabric since Buddhist times. With the metal-worker, the stone-carver, and the weaver, he was one of the village system, in ordinary life the decorator of their homes, or the embellisher of the palace of the local prince. When not employed in these capacities he was preparing pictures of religious subjects, so characteristic of the later Rajput schools. A simple and unsophisticated craftsman, he is best described by applying the words of Vasari with regard to Andrea del Castagno's first instructor : 'One of those country painters who work at a small price, who was painting the tabernacle of a peasant, a matter naturally of no great moment.'

The Mughal painter, living in a different atmosphere, was another type. He formed one of the retinue of the court, and in a sense was a courtier. In the direct employ of a king

or noble, he carried on his work according to the commands of his patron. He was probably not a paid servant, but on the production of a good piece of painting he was given a substantial present.

Indian painting is largely an anonymous art. This specially applies to the Buddhist and Rajput work, while only a certain number of the Mughal pictures bear any signature. A few names of artists have been handed down, but, except for the brief records of the Mughal painters in the *Āin-i-Ākbari*, there are few details available concerning these craftsmen. In view of the position that women have occupied in India generally, it is a notable fact that the first Indian painter mentioned by name was a woman. Chitralekha, a word which literally means a picture, was the heroine of an incident in the *Dwarkā Līlā*, a work of the Epic Age, and probably dating from many centuries before the Christian era. This artist had a genius for portraiture, and on this gift the point of the story, which is related elsewhere, depends. After this no painter is mentioned by name, until Tara Nath, a seventeenth century historian, refers to a small group of artists mainly associated with the work of the Buddhist school. The principal information gathered from this writer is that these individuals were versatile workmen, equally good in both sculpture and painting. Chinese records mention several early Buddhist artists by name, who had emigrated from India to the Far East, with accounts of their work, but from these it is evident that they had become absorbed in the country of their exile, and can hardly be regarded as belonging to the sphere of Indian painting. Of the Rajput artists, except a few comparatively modern families in the Punjab Hill States, no names have been handed down; but the *Āin-i-Ākbari* produces a series of cameo-

like descriptions of the Mughal painter, which throw some light on this craftsman as an individual. One interesting fact becomes evident in studying these brief accounts of the painters of Akbar's time, and that is that art rises superior to caste. Several of the most prominent Hindu artists retained at the Mughal court were drawn from lowly sources, the famous Daswanth, and two painters of the name of Kesu, all belonging to the *kahar*, or palanquin-bearer caste.

Indian painting is classified by Indian connoisseurs, partly geographically, but mainly by the terms of its technique. Each school or local development is identified by its *kalm*, a word translated literally as 'pen,' but meaning 'brush.' The different styles of painting are therefore referred to as of the Delhi, Deccani, or Kangra *kalm*, etc., according to the character of the brushwork. Only an expert or hereditary painter can be sure of the distinctions between pictures of different *kalms*, as some of these are very fine, but it is not difficult to define a broad classification of the more important styles. In this connection the classical frescoes of the Buddhist are not included, the system of *kalms* being used only with regard to the miniature painting of the Rajputs and Mughals. Rajput painting is divided into two main *kalms*, the Jeypore and the Kangra ; Mughal painting has many *kalms*, as this art with local variations was practised in many centres. In this way we have the Delhi, Lucknow, Deccani, Irani, Kashmiri, Patna, as well as a Mughal type of the Jeypore *kalm*. These different styles of miniature painting are described under their various heads.

The first part of this book deals with a survey of the history of Indian painting, divided into its main periods or schools. The second portion is devoted to a description of the principal developments of the art, as these arose out of this history.

PART I

HISTORY OF INDIAN PAINTING

I

THE EARLY PERIOD

PREHISTORIC, VEDIC, AND PRIMITIVE BUDDHIST RECORDS, UP TO THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

THE evidences of prehistoric painting in India are scanty, but the few remains that have been discovered are naturally very interesting. There are primitive records of hunting scenes crudely drawn on the walls of a group of caves in the Kaimur Range of Central India, while examples of painting of the later Stone Age have been found in excavations in the Vindhya Hills. Near the latter were also gathered rubbed specimens of 'ruddle' (hæmatite), together with palettes for grinding down this pigment, in fact several indications of the existence in this locality of a neolithic art studio.

One record of what may prove to be an authentic example of prehistoric man's artistic activities in India was recently found in a range of hills immediately east of the Mand river, near the village of Singhanpur, in Raigarh State, Central Provinces. On the sandstone rock at the mouth of a series of caves in these hills are a number of rude drawings, in a red pigment, which may be of very remote antiquity. These drawings depict human beings and animals, and are accompanied by what appear to be hieroglyphics. Some of the animals are characteristically drawn, such as a stag, an elephant, and a hare, while the action of the figures has con-

siderable spirit. A hunting scene, where a number of people are endeavouring to secure a huge bison, is graphically portrayed, several of the company having been tossed and gored in their efforts to round up the animal. A similar incident on the same wall evidently depicts a buffalo badly wounded with spears, and staggering in its death agony, surrounded by the exultant hunters. Stone implements have been found in the deposits at the foot of these rocks, which may be an important indication as to the age of these petroglyphs. Although many of these drawings are now unintelligible, enough of them have been identified to show that this primitive artist had a natural gift for artistic expression, as proved by the facile manner in which he interpreted his ideas by means of these effective hæmatite brush-forms.

Other localities in which ancient and archaic paintings have been discovered are in the Mirzapur district of the United Provinces, where there are a number of caves bearing traces of hæmatite drawings of a highly interesting nature. As usual, hunting scenes are the principal subjects, and we find the chase of wild animals, such as the rhinoceros and the sambar stag, most realistically rendered. All these drawings bear a remarkable resemblance to the famous rock-shelter paintings of Cogul in Spain, which are presumed to be the work of Aurignacian man of many thousands of years ago. An exploration of the Raigarh and Mirzapur caves might reveal clues not only of the birth of painting in India, but also throw considerable light on the early history of mankind in the East generally.

It may be observed, however, that Palæolithic Art is mainly a phenomenon, remote and isolated, and this specially applies to Indian painting. There is a hiatus of probably thousands of years between these apparently dateless specimens of the

early culture of India and the first actual historic record of the art. What may be considered the most ancient concrete example of dateable painting is to be found on the walls of the Jogimara cave of the Ramgarh Hill in Sirguja, a small and remotely situated State in the Central Provinces. These frescoes are presumed to have been executed about the first century before the Christian era.

At first sight they present a somewhat incoherent collection of brush-forms in red and black paint, daubed on the roughly prepared surface of the rock by a very uncultured hand. This unattractive effect proves on closer inspection to have been brought about by a subsequent clumsy restoration of the original work, a crude but well-intentioned effort, which has almost succeeded in obliterating the old design. The scheme includes a series of concentric panels depicting a variety of subjects—architecture, animals and figures—which, although much defaced, are similar in style to the plastic art of the same period. Borders with repeating patterns of fishes, *makara* and other aquatic monsters enclose these panels, but the story which these paintings appear to illustrate has not as yet been identified.

That other rock-cut halls and chambers were originally also adorned with frescoes is more than likely, but the devastating influence of the Indian climate has been responsible for the destruction of these mural paintings. In the same way the structural edifices of this period, built undoubtedly of timber and unbaked brick, have likewise disappeared. The surfaces of these buildings were believed to have been finished by means of a roughly-prepared plaster ground, and, as will be shown, were in some cases decorated with paintings. But this early form of architecture had not the quality of durability, and no example of these buildings bearing the

painting of the period has been discovered up to the present time.

The foregoing description of these early brush-forms, for they are little more, conveys the impression that their general character, except for the one special quality already referred to, is distinctly primitive, and that the art was at this period, judging from these crude efforts, in a very undeveloped state. This is the natural deduction derived from an inspection of the only surviving specimen of painting known in India before the Christian era. On the other hand, however, apart from this somewhat unconvincing example of the Jogimara cave, we are confronted with considerable documentary evidence, which seems to indicate that, for some centuries previous to this, painting in India was a comparatively advanced form of æsthetic expression. This particular evidence, comprising early and authentic literary references dealing with various aspects of painting as it existed before the spread of the Buddhist religion, may be examined. In undertaking this it will be found that the primitive character of the fresco at Ramgarh Hill is not consistent with the general testimony presented by the written records, as these clearly impute an art of a much more refined type than that illustrated by this solitary example.

To reconcile these two apparently conflicting facts, with regard to the early literature, some allowance should be made for poetical licence, as the references are mainly extracts from ancient epics, and may convey a superlative impression of the art. Moreover, painting is a form of expression of obvious impermanence, and the Ramgarh frescoes are probably but a poor specimen of what was really an art of a high character. It is as well to realise also that in dealing with a technical subject such as painting, literary records, except

those rare treatises embracing the practical aspect of the art, should not be accepted as wholly reliable accounts of its appearance and character, but mainly regarded as supplementary proofs of its existence and extent. These literary testimonies may not be contemporary with this early period, but are manifestly inspired by very ancient traditions, or are based on works known to be of great antiquity.

The origin of painting in India is related in a pretty legend, the substance of which is that the god Brahma taught a king how to bring back to life the dead son of a Brahman, by executing a portrait of the deceased, which he endowed with life, and so made an efficient substitute for the dead youth whom Yama, the god of death, refused to give up. It is a favourite device of the Oriental historian to connect the origins and beginnings of things with the names of divinities or kings, but in this instance Brahma is no doubt referred to as the 'creator,' and as such is associated with Visva-karma, the divine architect, the presiding genius of the art and crafts. As a sequel to this ancient tradition of the birth of the art there is more than one record to the effect that portraiture was the earliest and most popular form of painting in India, and that it was not uncommonly the occupation of princes.

In this connection there is an appropriate story, which goes back to the Epic Age of Indian history. The Princess Usha dreamt that a beautiful youth appeared to her, and was a companion in her walks abroad. She confided this to one of her maids-of-honour, Chitralekha (literally, 'a picture'), who had a natural gift for portraiture. This maid offered to relieve the anxiety of her mistress by painting the portraits of all the deities and great men of the time, so that the subject of the dream might be identified. As soon as Usha saw

the likeness of Aniruddha, the grandson of Krishna, the youth of her vision was revealed to her. This artistic incident subsequently led to their nuptials and a series of adventures, all relating to the life of Krishna. The useful gift of being able to reproduce from memory the likeness of a person forms the subject of several ancient Indian legends. Laufer even states that Indian painting originated at kings' courts, and not as a result of priestly influence.

In the early literature of the country there are several references to this secular aspect of the art, with the further information that it was in wall-painting that these ancient artists largely excelled. With the advent of Buddhism, however, a new idea was introduced into painting, and religious subjects became the main theme of the artists of the time. An incident in the history of this creed is depicted on a fresco at Gyantse in Tibet. It represents an artist executing a portrait from the Buddha himself, in order that the picture thus painted might be sent as a present to a neighbouring king. The royal recipient was so impressed by the sanctity of this likeness that he enshrined the picture, and he and his followers were converted to Buddhism from that date. This story further emphasises the important position that the art of portraiture occupied in the East from the most ancient times.

As instances of early allusions to the art of painting, the *Vinaya Pithak,* a Pali Buddhist work, dating from the third or fourth century before the Christian era, makes several references to the pleasure-houses of King Pasenada, containing picture-halls (*chittāgāra*), which were adorned with painted figures and decorative patterns. Painted halls are also described in the epic of the *Rāmāyana,* which composition in its original form is acknowledged to be of great antiquity. These early mural pictures, for such they may

be assumed to be, were undoubtedly the prototypes of the carved and painted 'picture galleries' of subsequent periods of Buddhist art, such as the painted cave-temples of Ajanta, the sculptured pictures on the walls of the columned halls of Ankhor in Siam, and the series of pictorial reliefs on the terraces of Borobudur in Java. Other extracts might be produced from similar ancient records all having a direct bearing on the art of painting, but these here referred to may be regarded as evidence that this art at a very early age was an important one, being utilised by kings and princes to embellish their courts and palaces, and at the same time to please and educate the people.

A Tibetan historian in the seventeenth century, of the name of Tara Nath, in a summary account of Indian Buddhist art from the earliest times to the author's day, ascribes a great antiquity to all the crafts of India 'dating even from the remote age prior to the disappearance of the Teacher (480 B.C.).' He specially alludes to the superlative excellence of the earliest wall paintings, which he attributes to the gods. This work was subsequently carried on by the 'Yakshas' (Punya-Yanas), literally, 'the good people,' divinely inspired artists employed by Asoka (250 B.C.), and next by the semi-human Nagas, under the control of Nagarjuna (*circa* A.D. 200). This may have some relation to the fact that some of the superior Hindu craftsmen of the present day regard their art as a mystery—divine sent—and trace their descent from Visva-karma, 'the great and deathless god, Lord of the Arts.'

It is possible that some time during this early period the 'Sadanga,' or 'Six Limbs of Indian Painting,' were evolved, a series of canons laying down the main principles of the art. Vatsyayana, who lived during the third century A.D.,

enumerates these in his *"Kāmasutra,"* having extracted them from still more ancient works.

These 'Six Limbs' have been translated as follows :

1. Rupabheda—The knowledge of appearances.
2. Pramanam—Correct perception, measure and structure.
3. Bhava—Action of feelings on forms.
4. Lavanya Yojanam—Infusion of grace, artistic representation.
5. Sadrisyam—Similitude.
6. Varnikabhanga—Artistic manner of using the brush and colours.—(Tagore).

The subsequent development of painting by the Buddhists indicates that these 'Six Limbs' were put into practice by Indian artists, and are the basic principles on which their art was founded. The first of these canons, Rupabheda, which refers to the study of nature, knowledge of the figure, landscape, and architecture, is noticeable in the early Buddhist work, where all these features have been carefully considered. Pramanam is proportion, anatomy and foreshortening—literally, perspective. The figures in the Ajanta frescoes, described later, are a proof of the close observance of this law. The third canon, that of Bhava, deals with the effect of the mind on the body, in the representation of which the Buddhist artist greatly excelled. Lavanya Yojanam is gracefulness and beauty, while Sadrisyam is simply truth, all of which constitute the first elements of good art. The final law, that of Varnikabhanga, relates to the correct use of the implements and materials employed in painting, and the observance of a sound method of technique. These six precepts are sufficient in themselves to prove that the art of painting had been extensively investigated and deeply studied in India at a very

early age. The Buddhist frescoes of the succeeding period demonstrate that all these laws were faithfully followed, and even in the later and less artistic ages of the country's history the art of painting owed much to the continued application of these traditional principles.

The early artists of China also governed their art of painting on a similar plan by means of 'The Six Canons.' These are first mentioned by Hsieh Ho in the sixth century A.D., and besides the number of laws being the same, there is a certain resemblance in the general intention of both these codes. The Chinese canons, emerging several centuries later, suggest that these were originally borrowed from the much older system of India.

Another compilation of undoubtedly ancient date, and showing indications of being based on pre-Buddhist traditions, is the *Chitralakshana*. This has been somewhat freely translated as 'The Theory of Painting,' but may be more accurately described as 'The Essential Marks or Characteristics of a Picture.' It deals with pictorial art in its religious sense, and connects the first use of painting with the images of the gods employed in the sacrificial cult. But the most interesting chapter treats of a rule of proportion for the drawing of figures, from the massive measurements of gods and kings to a more normal scale for the representation of ordinary people. The latter are to be depicted as of lesser height than kings, a system which is observable not only in India, but in the iconography of other countries and other ages. From the very minute instructions conveyed in this disquisition regarding the exact rules to be followed in setting out the figure, it proceeds to more general observations regarding the painting of the divine or human form. 'The standard face,' we are told, 'should be quadrangular, sharply out-

lined, beautifully finished, with shining and splendid attributes. It should not be made triangular, or crooked, nor should it be made oval or round. Whoever has painted a face accordingly will constantly possess blessings. For ordinary men a face longing after peace, lengthy or round, or triangular, etc., may be used.' The author then goes on to state that 'the hair of the head of a lord of men or of the gods should be fine and curly, coloured a heavenly blue.' The artist is allowed freedom in the delineation of women, but they should always be drawn in harmonious proportions so as to look modest, and in numerous groups, with the relation to the composition as a whole. Their flesh should be represented as youthful, and they should be painted in an upright posture. Many more technical details are included in this work, and it may be assumed from its tone and character, as well as its practical nature, that the art of painting occupied a prominent place in the ancient civilisation of the country.

This early treatise on the first principles of painting bears a close relation to a very important artistic code, which may have developed rather later. This was the *Śilpa Śāstra,* an elaborate system of æsthetic laws comprising the basis of every form of art in the country ; and this has survived to the present day. The *Śilpa Śāstra* shows that a scientific method of co-ordinating the art traditions of the country in a comprehensive collection of aphorisms was a very early feature in the history of painting in India.

II

THE BUDDHIST PERIOD

A.D. 50 TO 700

WITH the dawn of the Christian era we find ourselves on the threshold of the classical period in the history of Indian painting. Buddhism was largely the religion of the country, and continued the creed of the majority of the people until Brahmanism again prevailed (*circa* A.D. 700). During this time India appears to have been the leading power throughout the whole of the East, and all Asia looked to Buddhist India for the sources of its inspiration. The sacred sites in Kosala were the lode-star of the people, while the sayings of the Great Teacher were becoming the gospel of every country. The absorbing nature of the Buddhist religion was mainly responsible for this supremacy, and signs are not wanting that this was India's Golden Age. Culture was stimulated, and centres of learning flourished in all parts ; but in no direction was the influence of the new doctrine more pronounced than in the sphere of art. History furnishes several illustrations of the power of religion in the moulding of man's æsthetic productions, but probably none of these are more striking than the effect of Buddhism on the art of the East. Ceylon, Java, Siam, Burma, Nepal, Khotan, Tibet, Japan and China all testify, by the remains of their magnificent examples of sculpture, painting and architecture, to the artistic impulse of the Buddhist creed. Tara Nath, the seventeenth century historian already quoted, records the fact

that 'wherever Buddhism prevailed skilful religious artists were found,' and in India this undoubtedly applies to the art of painting. Time has destroyed much, but enough survives of the work of the artist-priest of the Buddhist period to indicate that this craftsman was the founder of a great school of painting.

The origin and growth of this school was a very natural one. Buddhism is essentially graphic—the early history of the cult lends itself to illustration by the brush more than the pen—and the original traditions were largely pictorial. As the demand for religious information increased, the Buddhist missionaries employed art as a ready means of imparting the tenets of the creed to all mankind. Priestly envoys from India travelled far and wide, carrying the doctrine of the Great Teacher into distant countries, and using art as the vehicle of their teaching. Pictorially illuminated scrolls would be a portable agency for conveying to the uninitiated the gospel of Gautama, and these were probably largely used by the priests on their long journeys. The temple banners (*tangka*) of Nepal and Tibet are undoubtedly a survival of this ancient method of spreading the religion by means of painted pictures, these being better understood and more readily appreciated by the common people than even the simplest script. The language of art would be a natural method of communication between different nations aspiring after the same ideal, when the more usual means of intercourse were impracticable. From China the thirst for knowledge from the fountain-head of Buddhism was most marked, and as early as A.D. 67 an Indian priest, of the name of Kashiapmadunga, at the request of the Emperor Ming Ti, journeyed to the Far East bringing with him a number of works of art, including pictures. From this date until the seventh century a steady stream of artist-priests proceeded

from India to China, introducing Buddhist thought and art, and stimulating the growth of the religion in the land of the Middle Kingdom. There are records that some of these settled down in that country and painted frescoes there, a process characteristic of the art of India during this period. Further East still, Japan shows strong traces of this movement, and in the painting of the Nara period in the seventh century, 'there is an unmistakable grandeur and the suggestion of a deep religious feeling about these early works of Buddhist art, but in very few cases can we affirm with certainty that they are the works of native artists. Not that they are in any way distinctly Chinese in character. It is rather of the contemporary Indian art, as we know it from the frescoes of the caves of Ajanta above all, that we are reminded by these monuments' (Dillon). Again, in connection with the famous fresco in the temple of Horiuji, presumed to date from the first part of the eighth century, Binyon states that 'this is quite Indian in character, recalling the frescoes of the cave-temples of Ajanta in its grand, strongly outlined figures, and in the feeling for character and life which it reveals. There seems no doubt that it is modelled upon the Ajanta frescoes, and the fact is eloquent and significant testimony to the freedom of intercourse then existing between India and Japan.' As late as the fifteenth century a distant echo of this influence is traced in the old Tosa school of painting in Japan, which is described as 'an offshoot of the miniaturist art come from India, through China, with the Buddhist religion. We will find traces of Indian formulas transformed, it is true, but opposed to the calligraphic influences of China' (Ricketts). On the other hand, there are indications that the spiritual and æsthetic atmosphere of India was in its turn attracting students from

other countries, who travelled there in order to investigate first-hand the literary and artistic records of a religious movement which was opening up an entirely new world of thought and action. The pilgrimages of Fa-Hian in the fifth and Hiuen Tsang in the seventh century are well known, but signs are not wanting that there were others, some of them artists, who returned with pictures indicating that they had undertaken coures of study under famous Indian masters of painting. These external evidences carry with them unmistakable proofs of the far-reaching influence of this brilliant school of painting, which flourished under the patronage of the Buddhist hierarchy in the first centuries of the present era. And in spite of the comparatively impermanent nature of the art as a whole, and the effect of centuries of severe climatic conditions, India itself furnishes several groups of frescoes of surpassing merit, thoroughly representative of this classical age of painting in the East.

As India was the birthplace of Buddhism, it is to be assumed that it was also the birthplace of the Buddhist school of painting. The gradual growth of the art may be partly followed in that fine series of frescoes at Ajanta, which illustrate an early stage of the painting as well as examples of it at a later period. Sigiriya, in Ceylon, also depicts it in one aspect of its maturity, while the wall paintings of Bagh, although now much injured, are in sufficient quantity to indicate the prolific nature of the school. These three sites comprise practically all that remains of Buddhist painting in India, but the high character of this work is such that we are left in no doubt as to the masterly proficiency of these early artists. As the frescoes of Ajanta and those at Sigiriya are fully expressive of this important development of the art, a description of these may assist in a study of the work of this period.

The rock-out temples of Ajanta are situated about four miles south-west of the small village of Fardapur, in the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, Fardapur being 35 miles by road from the nearest railway station of Jalgaon, on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. Here, in a lonely ravine, excavated in the face of an almost perpendicular scarp of rock, is a series of caves, twenty-nine in number, and only approached at the present time by a rough jungle path. The name 'cave' is a misnomer, but it has become the accepted term for ancient excavated shrines in India. The Buddhist 'caves' are all imitations of structural buildings in an advanced stage of development, some of the rock-cut halls at Ajanta being very imposing. These excavations sweep round in a curve of fully a semicircle, and are some 100 feet above the small stream which runs at the bottom of the glen. The situation is a romantic one, as are the majority of Buddhist shrines in India, for an artistic appreciation of natural scenery is particularly noticeable in Buddhist painting, and that the priests as a body were alive to the inspiring influences of a beautiful environment is evident in their invariable selection of picturesque sites. There is much that is remarkable in the actual construction of these cave-temples, as well as in their sculptured façades, but undoubtedly their chief interest lies in the painted frescoes with which the walls of many of them are adorned. Hidden away in the jungle for hundreds of years, the home only of beasts and bats, they first came to European knowledge in 1819, when, although showing signs of centuries of decay, large portions of the ancient painting were still recognisable. Since then, however, from a variety of causes, the frescoes have become still further obliterated, and what now remains is only an indistinct and blackened series of fragments of what was once perhaps

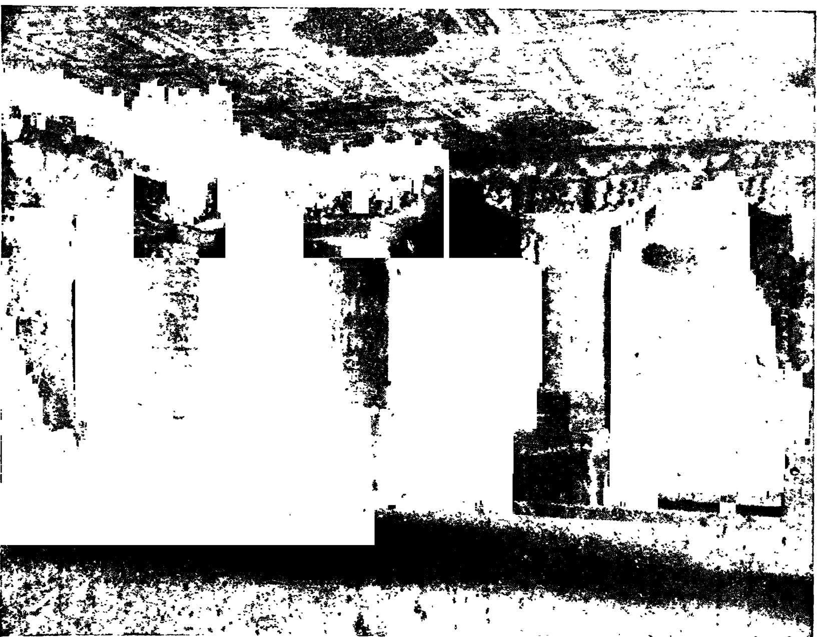
the greatest record of painting in the East. Sufficient is left, however, to enable us to realise almost completely the full story of the Ajanta frescoes, and to understand their import in relation not only to Indian painting, but to Oriental art in general.

Out of the twenty-nine excavations forming the complete series of caves at Ajanta, only sixteen of these are recorded in 1879 as containing painting in a greater or lesser degree. Nearly all, however, bore signs of having been originally decorated in this manner. But within recent years the ravages of time and other vicissitudes have been so marked that, in 1910, frescoes are found in only six out of the sixteen caves thus embellished. These six are Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17, and in all of them the whole of the walls and also the pillars and ceilings have been painted. When it is understood that some of these halls measure over sixty feet square, the painting that remains represents a very considerable quantity. But although the work in its entirety covers an extensive area, it must not be regarded as the result of a single undertaking. In reality it resolves itself into a number of distinct groups, representing various styles or periods, rather than the steady growth of one school. It is also possible to trace the handiwork of several of the individual artists engaged in the painting. These details, however, have not as yet been completely worked out, and until this is done the frescoes of Ajanta as a whole may be most satisfactorily classified into the following periods of time :

(a) Caves 9 and 10 *circa* A.D. 100.
(b) Pillars, in Cave 10 ,, A.D. 350 (perhaps later).
(c) Caves 16 and 17 ,, A.D. 500.
(d) Caves 1 and 2 ,, A.D. 626-628.

From this it will be seen that the Ajanta frescoes furnish a

PLATE I



INTERIOR VIEW OF ROCK-CUT MONASTERY AT AJANTA, INDICATING POSITION OF FRESCOES (SEVENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 2



ADORATION GROUP: MOTHER AND CHILD BEFORE BUDDHA, FRESCO FROM AJANTA, CAVE 17 (SIXTH CENTURY).

(*See page 34*)

record of painting, which, except for one interval, covers a period of some six centuries. This interval, from the first to the fourth century, however, relates to a fairly considerable space of time, and may correspond to a dearth of the art at a certain time alluded to by Tara Nath. After mentioning that in the reign of Nagarjuna, which most probably was in the second century, 'many works were performed by Naga artists,' the historian proceeds to state that 'then for a long course of years no regular succession of artists could be traced, although certain individuals of genius made strenuous efforts. Later, in the time of King Buddhapaksha [presumed to have reigned in the fifth or sixth century], the sculpture and painting of the artist Bimbasara, founder of the school styled Madhyadesha, were specially wonderful, and equal in merit to those of the gods.' It seems possible, therefore, that owing to various circumstances the art of painting, as illustrated in Caves 9 and 10, temporarily declined after this period, but was subsequently revived by a school of artists who executed the later work.

Except that one, or perhaps two, of the scenes have been identified as depicting contemporary historical episodes, the subjects throughout are exclusively Buddhist. They are all associated with the *Jātakas,* a collection of stories recording the previous incarnations of the Buddha. These comprise the most ancient and the most complete collection of folk-lore now extant, and were the main themes illustrated by the Buddhist artists all over the East, whether in colour or in stone. A description of the actual workmanship will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter, so that at this stage it will suffice to state that the technical process by which these paintings were executed is considered by experts to be a combination of tempera and fresco.

The paintings in Caves 9 and 10, which authorities agree are the oldest, being executed probably in the first century A.D., bear some resemblance in style to the sculptures of Bharhut, Amaravati and Sanchi, which fact has aided not a little in the determination of their date. This work resolves itself into two, perhaps three, definite periods, the earlier being of a far greater degree of refinement than the later. Taken as a whole the painting in Caves 9 and 10 demonstrates that the art even at this early age had reached an advanced state of development, exhibiting considerable skill in its execution and draftsmanship. The oldest painting, therefore, at Ajanta represents no primitive beginning, but an art of some maturity ; not the first efforts of individuals groping in the darkness of inexperience, but the finished work of a school of artists trained in a high art, manifesting great and ancient traditions. From the references in the early literature of India dealt with in the preceding chapter, it has been already inferred that painting was a developed form of artistic expression previous even to the rise of Buddhism, and the character of the most ancient frescoes at Ajanta serves to strengthen this supposition.

The paintings in Cave-temples Nos. 9 and 10 appear to have been executed while the surrounding country was under the rule of a dynasty of Dravidian kings—the Andhras (27 B.C.—A.D. 236)—who, although professing Brahmanism, put no obstacle in the way of Buddhism. What relations existed between the ruling chiefs and the hierarchy at this time is by no means well defined. It is possible that these rock-cut halls were excavated and decorated at the command of a local prince, who gave his orders through the abbot of the monastic order concerned. Later on there appears to have been a co-operation between the priesthood and the

reigning dynasty with regard to the dedication of these monuments, but the social circumstances out of which this art grew are not known. There are certain indications that Ajanta was a place of almost absolute seclusion, where, hidden away in their rock-cut retreat, this community of artist-priests produced their paintings oblivious of the tide of political conditions which ebbed and flowed in the country around them. An exclusive and self-contained body of priests, they might have lived and moved in an atmosphere of their own, just as at the present time on the isolated heights of the Himalayas, ancient Buddhist monasteries exist where the priests regard the outer world in the light of another planet, as remote and unknown as the stars.

But that these artists had a knowledge of a larger and fuller life, other than that bounded by the narrow cliffs of this ravine, is observable at once, when the subject-matter of their painting is analysed. The king is seen surrounded by the pageantry of his court, with all its attendant opulence and circumstance. The scenes pulsate with vitality and action, and, although fundamentally religious, they reveal an interest in secularism which is distinctly marked.

The characteristic features of these early frescoes of Ajanta are a simple, bold style of painting emphasised by a spirited and vigorous outline. The scenes are well composed, some of the individual figures are very skilfully drawn, and the expressive treatment of the hands is noticeable.

An interval of some 250 years elapsed before the next paintings at Ajanta were executed, and these are mainly single figure subjects on the pillars of Cave 10. Their presumed date is about A.D. 350, although this may be later. In view of the considerable passage of time between this work and that preceding it, as may be expected, an appreciable

difference in style is discernible. There is reason to believe that the 'nimbus,' which is an important attribute to these particular figures, as well as the treatment of the drapery, bears a resemblance to the Gandhara (Græco-Buddhist) sculptures of the North-West Frontier. Although conventional in character, they are simple and dignified in pose, and denote a more decided breadth of treatment than the earlier work. The political circumstances which existed in the Deccan, while these particular frescoes were being executed, are not altogether clear, but the period coincides with the rise of the Gupta Dynasty (A.D. 320), and the paintings probably mark the stimulus given to all forms of art by the establishment of Samudragupta's vigorous administration.

Caves 16 and 17 of the series depict this Buddhist art as it was practised in the sixth century. At this time the country around was under the sway of the Vakataka dynasty, about which little is known. A mutilated inscription outside Cave 16 indicates that this vihara was excavated to the order of a son of a minister under one of these kings. That the dynasty was a powerful one there are several proofs, including the fact that it brought about an alliance between one of its members and a princess of the Imperial Gupta line. The scenes in Cave 16, which are slightly earlier than those in Cave 17, are now much obliterated, but the fragments that remain prove that some of the compositions in this rock-cut hall were exceptionally fine, notably the treatment of figures combined with a pagoda-like architecture. These buildings are of a light and fanciful order, of a type which is characteristic of the Buddhist period in all parts of India. But it is in Cave 17, where a very considerable amount of work still survives, that we see the most representative work of this school. This is in what has been described as the 'narrative style,' and is

PLATE 3



FRESCO PAINTING FROM SIGIRIYA CEYLON
(FIFTH CENTURY).

PLATE 4



FRESCO FROM SIGIRIYA, CEYLON (FIFTH CENTURY)

literally a picture gallery illustrating some of the most engrossing episodes in the birth, life, and death of the Buddha. The conceptions of this group of frescoes denote less idealism, and there is a decided feeling for the dramatic. They seem to have been selected with the object of attracting the observer by means of their direct humanitarianism. Replete with vigour—for they are full of action—they depict the art in its most graphic form. This period probably coincides with the time when it was being felt that Buddhism might be losing its hold on India, and Cave 17 suggests a direct appeal to the people by means of a series of pictorial messages contained in its frescoes.

The latest painting of all is to be observed in Caves 1 and 2, the date of which has been fixed by means of one of the scenes in Cave 1. This is believed to illustrate the Indian king, Pulakesin II, receiving an embassy from the Persian monarch, Khursu Parviz, which event is presumed to have taken place between A.D. 626 and 628. Apart from the picture of this historical episode, there are in this and the other caves several features suggesting an association with Persia and the arts of that country.

Cave 1 contains a large amount of painting, and one of the scenes includes the most entrancing representation of Gautama Buddha in the whole series. But in another direction considerable interest attaches to the painting in this cave, because of its similarity to some of the Buddhist sculptures in Mid-Java, which were executed as late as A.D. 850. The art tradition, therefore, seems to have been carried by Indian emigrants to this distant island, and there, two centuries later, to have materialised in the magnificent reliefs on the stupa of Borobudur.

The scenes in Cave 2 are probably the latest work of all,

and some portions of these may be regarded as heralding a decline in the art. After this no more frescoes of this school are on record, and Cave 2 may therefore sound the first note, still however very remote, of the death-knell of Buddhist painting in India. Two styles of work at least are observable in this cave, both different from that in any of the other rock-cut halls. One of these is largely conventional and displays a formalism associating it with the contemporary painting of Khotan as revealed by the explorations of Le Coq and Stein. It also betrays a likeness to much of the more recent painting of Tibet, as exemplified in the oldest form of *tangka*, or temple banner. The other style manifests a want of unity in the compositions, and in parts reveals traces of carelessness in handling. It is as if portions had been executed by an immature prentice hand. The central figures are still the work of the master-craftsman, but the accessories do not indicate the same experienced treatment. From this, however, it must not be supposed that the paintings in this cave as a whole are much inferior to the remainder of the frescoes, they seem to reflect a premonition of decay which is significant of the state of the religion at this time.

The other remains of the Buddhist school of painting are the frescoes at Sigiriya in Ceylon, and those at Bagh in the Gwalior State. The former are probably the earlier and the date of these can be fixed with some accuracy, as the subjects denote that they were executed during the reign of Kasyapa I, which lasted from A.D. 479 to 497. They are, therefore, contemporary with Caves 16 and 17 at Ajanta, some of the scenes of which bear a resemblance to the Ceylon example. They are contained in two irregular rock-cut chambers, and comprise a series of representations of some twenty females, three-quarter-length figures, arranged singly and in couples,

in the latter case apparently a royal mistress and her maid. They are not presumed to have any religious significance, and the Buddhist opinion is that they are portraits of King Kasyapa's queens. The pose of these figures is singularly graceful, while the actual brushwork indicates a considerable knowledge of modelling and technique. On the whole, while these examples do not exhibit quite the skill of the best work at Ajanta, they are nevertheless very charming works of art.

With regard to the paintings at Bagh, no inscriptions, or similar data, are available to indicate their age, nor is there any information as to the history of this territory during the period these are supposed to have been executed. In a straight line these caves are but a hundred and fifty miles from Ajanta, but as the great Narbada river runs between, it is more than probable they came under the sway of a different ruler, who, however, is unknown. But the frescoes in these excavations bear no little resemblance to the work in the later caves at Ajanta, so that they may be referred to the sixth or seventh century. It is possible, however, that the painting is not all of one period, but so much of it is destroyed that this is difficult to determine. Originally this group of caves contained a very extensive and important collection of paintings, one of the largest of the excavations, a hall of over 90 feet square, having the roof, walls, and columns covered with frescoes ; but now only crumbling fragments remain. The subjects are not entirely of a religious order, the majority of them being of a secular nature, but nevertheless they are associated with some aspect of the Buddhist ritual. For instance, one scene, clearly identifiable, illustrates a performance of the *hallisaka,* a musical drama which is being enacted with considerable freedom. The licence generally displayed in the paintings of this group suggests a

popular phase of Buddhism, which that religion apparently tolerated in India during the period of its decline.

The greater part of the frescoes at Ajanta, supplemented by the remains at Bagh, and the friezes at Sigiriya may be regarded as records of the consummation of Buddhist painting in India. These examples were executed at an interval of time which corresponds, for all practical purposes, to the outstanding creative age of the Gupta kings. Although a Vaishnavite Hindu dynasty, the Imperial Guptas showed no active antipathy to the Buddhist faith ; but the decline of the latter religion, brought about by the conflicts between the rival sects of the Greater (*Mahāyāna*) and Lesser (*Hīnayāna*) Vehicles, and by the steady progress of Hinduism, is discernible during this era. The dominions of the Guptas were extensive, and the influence of their diplomatic relations reached from the Oxus to Ceylon. The establishment of this powerful empire, together with the settled conditions of the country due to a time of peace and prosperity, acted as a great incentive to all forms of literature and art. In such favourable circumstances these separate groups of fresco painting were produced. That this art was a prolific one and that the examples here described are only a small portion of the painting executed in the times of the Guptas, and even until a later date, seems clear. For both Fa-Hian and Hiuen Tsang, Chinese pilgrims who travelled extensively in India, the former about A.D. 400 and the latter from 629 to 645, have recorded buildings at widely different sites, which were remarkable on account of their mural paintings. Fa-Hian describes a palace at Kapilavastu, the Bethlehem of Buddhism, in which was a picture of the Immaculate Conception, where the Buddha, riding on a white elephant, enters his mother's side. A monastery in North-Western India

excited the admiration of Hiuen Tsang, for the doors, windows, and wainscots were decorated with paintings. Even at the time of these adventurous sages, however, these buildings were, together with their pictorial embellishments, being allowed to fall into a state of decay, as the influence of Buddhism declined ; while the subsequent Musalman invasions no doubt accounted for the complete disappearance of others. But Ajanta and Bagh, being monastic retreats, lying far from the track of political or religious strife, were overlooked, and so escaped destruction in order to be rediscovered at a later age. Sigiriya owes its security to the fact that it was an almost inaccessible sanctuary devised by the parricide king, Kasyapa, as a place of refuge after the committal of his crime.

A great factor in the preservation of these particular paintings is that they were applied on the surface of imperishable rock, and in other ways were adequately protected from the ravages of the elements. But there is reason to believe that much painting of a similar value was executed on buildings of an impermanent character, such as masonry, and even structures of wood and other more perishable materials. Some of the Ajanta pictures depict a type of edifice consisting of a wooden framework filled in with plaster, on which no doubt frescoes were painted. The extent of the work of this school, therefore, can only be a matter of surmise, but it is quite conceivable that this form of painting was largely practised all over India at a time which corresponds with the rise and progress of the Buddhist religion.

The historian, Tara Nath, throws some useful although confusing light on the Buddhist art of painting in India which may be considered at this stage. He refers to three styles of early Buddhist art, which may be described as the Deva,

the Yaksha and the Naga styles. The Deva style was practised in the country of Magadha (an area corresponding approximately to modern Bihar) for some centuries after the advent of the Buddha—from the sixth century B.C. to the third century B.C. He relates that in former days human masters, who were endowed with miraculous power, produced astonishing works of art. It is expressly stated in the Vinaya-agama and other works that the wall paintings, etc., of these masters were such as to deceive by their likeness to the actual things depicted.'

The Yaksha style flourished about the third century B.C., as Tara Nath associates it with King Asoka. In spite of efforts to locate a race of Yakshas, it is clear that the author treats these as a community of supernatural beings, people who were demi-gods and whose art was of a miraculous order. The Naga style was practised in the time of Nagarjuna, a writer and philosopher who lived at the beginning of the third century A.D., by 'Naga artizans.' Traces of the Nagas, an early race who lived under the protection of snakes, are to be found in India from Kashmir to Madras. The stupa of Amaravati, erected about the second century A.D. on the Krishna river (Madras Presidency), shows many traces of the influence of the Nagas, who appear to have been great architects and artists. From Tara Nath's criticism of the work of all these three styles we are left in no doubt as to its general character being essentially realistic, for he proceeds to sum up his description by the statement that 'the works of the Devas, Yakshas, and Nagas for many years deceived men by their reality.'

After the third century A.D. Tara Nath remarks on an appreciable decline, 'it seemed as if the knowledge of art had vanished from among men.' A revival took place later,

and the author then gives an account of some of the Buddhist schools of painting. The three main schools were the Middle Country, the Western, and the Eastern. Geographically the Middle Country school of painting corresponded substantially to the United Provinces of the present day. It was founded by a great painter and sculptor, of the name of Bimbasara, born in Magadha in the reign of a king Buddhapaksha, whose date is presumed to be about the fifth or sixth century A.D. Tara Nath remarks that the painters of this school were very numerous, and the style resembled the early works of the Devas. Bimbasara may be therefore regarded as having effected a renaissance of the ancient style of painting, as this existed some ten centuries previously. The Western school may be located in Rajputana, as the principal artist was Sringadhara, born in Marwar in the reign of King Sila. This monarch was probably Siladitya Guhila, of Udaipur, who lived in the seventh century A.D. The paintings of this school much resembled those of the Yakshas. The Eastern school flourished in Varendra (Bengal), under the kings, Dharmapala and Devapala, in the ninth century, and the style was that of the Nagas. Dhiman and his son, Bitpalo, were the most famous artists of the Eastern school, and they both appear to have been equally proficient in painting, sculpture, and metal work.

Subsidiary schools or styles of art were practised between the sixth and tenth centuries in Kashmir, Nepal, Burma, and Southern India, but, according to Tara Nath, they were mainly inspired by the productions of the three principal schools referred to above.

III

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

A.D. 700 TO 1600

In the previous chapter it has been shown that in the first centuries of the Christian era a school of Indian painting was established, which, apart from other superior qualities, manifested a virility and intensity of purpose, promising still further developments in the succeeding centuries of the country's history. This promise, however, remained unfulfilled. With the decay of Buddhism in India in the seventh century A.D., the art appears to have declined, and for the exceptionally long period of nearly a thousand years the actual examples of Indian painting which have been handed down to us are few and far between. These examples consist of several paintings on palm leaves of probably the twelfth century from Bengal ; some Jain book illustrations of the fifteenth century ; remains of Brahmanical frescoes at Ellora, which may be of the twelfth century or earlier, and a few other miscellaneous fragments of the art. Very little concrete evidence survives, therefore, to assist in forming any really definite conclusions with regard to the progress of this handicraft in the Medieval Period. From the time that the last painter at Ajanta threw down his brush in A.D. 650, until we come into contact with the art again as it was revived in the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, the story of painting in India resolves itself very largely into one of inferences.

The sequence of unsettled political conditions that prevailed in India during this long interval may have been a contributory reason for such a discontinuity; but, as will be shown, it is remarkable that other arts flourished while painting apparently ceased. During the latter portion of this period, India was also undergoing the throes of the Muhammadan invasion, great constitutional changes were taking place, and the country was too disturbed by this epoch-making aggression to produce any noteworthy arts. In its religious aspect, too, India was becoming transformed, on the one hand by the decline of Buddhism and the steady rise of Hinduism in its new and revived form, and on the other by the advent and growth of Muhammadanism. It will be seen, therefore, that generally the condition of India was such as to preclude any prospect of a marked movement in the field of art during the greater part of the 'Medieval Period.'

Nevertheless it is inconceivable that the Buddhist painters died out, and their art became only a tradition, because of the change in the country's creed. Brahmanism, which succeeded Buddhism, was, in other mediums, supremely artistic, as the sculpture and architecture of the period abundantly testify. In the sphere of the plastic arts, the period between the eighth and tenth centuries has been held to illustrate a high and complete realisation of Indian artistic ideals. The sculptural triumphs of this age, when the reformed religion of Hinduism was the motive power, are to be seen in the great monuments of Elephanta, Ellora and Borobudur in Java, representing the grandest efforts of the carvers' skill. But of painting, contemporary with these splendid examples, records are extremely rare. It seems as if this medium has ceased to be encouraged by the promoters of the revived creed.

Several explanations partially accounting for this state of affairs may be considered. It is quite possible that from climatic causes the examples of painting in this period may have perished, or they may have been destroyed by the fanatical followers of other sects. One view that presents itself is that progress in the different artistic media does not always continue on parallel lines ; in other words, that the apogee of painting in India took place in the seventh century with the Buddhist frescoes of Ajanta, while the maturity of the sister art of sculpture was not attained until at least a hundred years later. The relative difficulties of technique have in more than one country been responsible for the uneven advance of these two forms of artistic expression, the brush being more easy of manipulation than the chisel.

The subject may, however, be approached from another direction. In view of the somewhat scanty records of painting in India itself, recourse may be had to an investigation of the art as practised in those territories immediately contiguous to her borders. Two adjacent countries at once produce some remarkable evidence, which throws no little light upon the subject. These are Eastern Turkestan and Tibet. Khotan, in Eastern Turkestan, formed a part of the Indian Empire under more than one dynasty, and the explorations of Stein and Le Coq have revealed much which has a direct bearing on the progress of Asian art during this medieval period. All the evidence points to the fact that this area was the meeting place of Hellenistic, Indian, Persian, and Chinese civilisations in the first centuries of the Christian era. Research work at this important place of contact has produced the most valuable results. A considerable portion of the material collected on these ancient sites consists of examples of painting, such as frescoes and silken banners.

PLATE 5



FRESCO FROM DANDAN UILIQ, KHOTAN (EIGHTH CENTURY), FROM 'ANCIENT KHOTAN,' BY STEIN.

Much of the fresco work resembles in no minor degree the Ajanta cave-temples, but is of a subsequent date, as the mass of it belongs to the eighth century A.D. It is Buddhistic in character, and in its vigorous linear drawing is obviously of the Indian school. In their widest aspect these remains are of the utmost importance on account of the hitherto almost blank page of Central Asian history which they now fill. In the field of art the great value of these frescoes lies in the fact that they provide an insight into the probable state of painting in India, when the actual records of that country are deficient. The result of Stein's and Le Coq's labours have brought to light frescoes showing characteristics of the art of all the countries which were grouped around Khotan, but in some examples especially those from Dandan-Uiliq, dating from the eighth century A.D., the work might have been from the brush of one of the Ajanta painters, the similarity is so marked. In Chiu-tzu Le Coq has unearthed several painted banners, which are the prototype of the well-known temple banner (*tangka*) of Tibet. The painting of the *tangka* is undoubtedly an old art, but although many ancient-looking examples have been procured from Tibet, few of these are likely to be older than the seventeenth century. But the Chiu-tzu banners are of the eighth century, and by their appearance illustrate this aspect of Buddhist painting in an early stage of its development. That these pictures were also produced in India is proved by an interesting reference made by the Chinese critic, Teng Ch'un, in the eleventh century, who specially remarks that at the monastery of Nalanda, in Bengal, the priests 'painted pictures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas on the linen of the West.' There was considerable religious intercourse between Magadha and Tibet in the eleventh century, which may account for the

two countries employing the same method of artistic expression.

In another respect the continuance of the Indian tradition, as demonstrated by the Ajanta paintings, may be found in Tibet, where the walls of the monasteries and temples are largely decorated with frescoes illustrating various aspects of the Buddhist religion. Although none of these are sufficiently ancient actually to connect in any way with the latest Indian frescoes, some of them are several centuries old, and in many of their features recall at once the classical paintings of the older school. The Tibetan temple banners, too, have their resemblance, which is one of technique. For these *tangkas* are also fresco paintings in a sense, being tempera paintings on canvas, the ground being prepared on the same principle as that employed in the mural art.

In Khotan, therefore, at an early date, and in Tibet at a later period, it may be possible to discern in the wall frescoes and pictured scrolls the course that Indian painting pursued during this medieval period. The process of time, in the case of Tibet, has transformed and conventionalised the art, but nevertheless there are evidences that it owed much of its character to the influence of the original Indian Buddhist school of painting.

IV
THE MUGHAL SCHOOL
A.D. 1550 TO 1800

THE Mughal school of painting in India coincides with the period of the Mughal dynasty. Coming into prominence during the reign of Akbar in the latter half of the sixteenth century, it attained its apogee under the imperial dilettante, Jehangir. The reign of his successor, Shah Jehan, marks the first steps in its decline, while under the unsympathetic rule of Aurangzeb its death-knell was rung. It lingered on, a decadent art, under the Nawabs of Oudh until the end of the eighteenth century, and practically ceased to exist with the advent of the British rule. As a school of painting its duration was a short one, extending over only two and a half centuries, and it has been aptly referred to as not exactly a school, but more of a brilliant episode in the history of Indian art.

The ancestral home of Mughal painting was originally in Samarkand and Herat, where, under the Timurid kings in the fifteenth century, Persian art reached its zenith. An offshoot of Central Asian art, the term, Indo-Persian, or, more precisely still, Indo-Timurid, is regarded by some authorities as a more suitable name for this particular development of Indian painting. Timur's personal association with India is not ordinarily regarded as conducive to the cultivation of art, as the principal trace of his expedition into India, in 1398, was a wide track of desolate cities, sacked and burned by his Tartar hordes. But history proves that the dynasty of

the Timurids was not a barbaric one ; indeed, there is every indication that the descendants of Timur were highly civilised and refined men, and the most artistic princes that ever reigned in Persia. Painting flourished directly under their patronage, being essentially an art of the court. Distinguished artists took service with these monarchs, passing from one prince to another, as the sceptre descended from father to son. Under the protection of Sultan Husain of Khurasan, at the end of the fifteenth century, worked Bihzad, the greatest artist of the time, who has been called 'the Raphael of the East.' Babar, a descendant of Timur, and the original founder of the Mughal dynasty in India, speaks of Bihzad in his memoirs as 'the most eminent of all painters,' and it is evident from his writings that this monarch had studied his pictures most critically. It was with the descendants of such a school as Bihzad's and under the personal patronage of the Emperor Akbar—grandson of such a connoisseur as Babar—that the Mughal school of painting came into being.

Among the many striking characteristics of the pioneers of the Mughal dynasty was their interest in things artistic. Occupied mainly in carving out for themselves a kingdom in a foreign country, they nevertheless made great use of their imperial influence in encouraging art, architecture, and manufactures. The keen æsthetic instincts of Babar were, owing to the vicissitudes of his career, never allowed to find expression, but the Emperor Akbar ruled at a more favourable time, and when India was prepared for an artistic revival. Architecture and the industrial arts of the age bear witness to his judicious encouragement, while the subject of painting received his special attention. Abul Fazl, whose observations in the *Āin-i-Ākbari* on the state of painting at

this period are exceedingly valuable, refers in the most emphatic manner to Akbar's personal interest in the painter and his art. This sympathetic attitude of the great monarch eventually led to a number of artists from other countries making their way to the Mughal court to carry on their art under the patronage of the Emperor. Trained mainly in the Persian or allied schools, these painters appear to have been welcomed by the royal connoisseur, and speedily entrusted with commissions. In Abul Fazl's list of artists of this period may be noticed Farrukh the Kalmak, Abd-al-Samad the Sherazi, and Mir Sayyad Ali of Tabriz, a selection which indicates the geographical source of inspiration of early Mughal painting. Later, a few artists from Samarkand figure at the court of Jehangir, showing that this intimate connection with the art of Iran was continuous.

From this it will be understood that fundamentally the Mughal school of painting was an exotic, just as the Mughals themselves were aliens in India ; but in the same way as that race has gradually become absorbed into the people of Hindustan, so Mughal painting has come to be regarded as an integral part of the art of India. For, side by side with these foreign artists, worked the indigenous painters of the country, the excellence of whose native skill was speedily utilised by the observant Emperor. Such Hindu names as Basawan, Daswanth, and Kesudasa, famous painters at the court of Akbar, prove the liberal view that was taken of art at this time. The adaptability of these Hindu craftsmen may be realised from the fact that their royal patron commissioned them to illustrate the works of the Persian poet, Nizami, and other literary productions, normally foreign to their genius. Associated together in a congenial atmosphere of art, made possible by the generous æsthetic temperament of

their imperial employer, it will be readily seen that the one style speedily influenced the other, that each community was ready to profit by the other's experience, and under these mutually responsive conditions, it is only natural that a combination of the two modes was the final result. From this favourable beginning the Mughal school of painting was developed.

During the time of Akbar, therefore, the new school took its origin, and in the early examples of this period the two styles of work above indicated may be easily distinguished. An art of the court, secular and eclectic in its character, it had no profound associations with the people or their country, it gave pleasure to princely connoisseurs, but outside the palace it was originally little known. As time progressed it became more democratic, and in its decadence, it is true, it penetrated to lower strata, but mainly in the form of popular portraiture. For one outstanding feature of the painting of the Mughals is its devotion to the delineation of likenesses. Realism is its key-note, and its subjects are largely drawn from incidents connected with the magnificent court life of the time. In scale the Mughal picture is small, never attaining the dignity and size of the Buddhist frescoes, and, under the popular name of 'miniature painting,' its connection with Persian book illustrations may be observed. A record of the names of some forty artists, known to have lived during the reign of Akbar, many of whom were retainers of the royal court, will serve to indicate the flourishing condition of the art.

But it was left to the Emperor Jehangir to develop Mughal painting to its fullest extent. The notable artistic sense of his ancestor, Babar, was rekindled with additional force in Jehangir, and one of this monarch's innocent prides lay in

PLATE 6



MUGHAL PICTURE, DEPICTING THE EMPEROR JEHANGIR SHOOTING A LION (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 7



MUGHAL PICTURE, REPRESENTING THE CELEBRATIONS AT THE BIRTH OF SHAH JEHAN (LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY).

the skill and genius of his court painters. Europeans were beginning to reach the capital of the 'Great Mughal' in the first half of the seventeenth century, and more than one of these travellers relates the great interest that Jehangir took in the productions of his retained artists. Portraiture and hunting scenes were the favourite subjects of this time, but the more scientific fields of botany and natural history were objects of special study. Unusual flowers or rare animals were ordered to be copied by the Emperor, and some of these pictures, most elaborate and faithful reproductions, have survived to the present day. Western paintings also were arriving in the country during this period, and the copying of these was frequently indulged in. Portraits of Europeans, obviously facsimiles of Occidental paintings, are occasionally forthcoming, and pictures illustrating incidents in connection with Christianity, which was then making its appearance in India, are not rare. All these date from the time of Jehangir, when the painting of pictures was given every encouragement, and was fully appreciated by the ruling class.

Under the succeeding rule of Shah Jehan, the Mughal school shows the first signs of deterioration ; the robust character of the work executed in the previous reign is not so marked, there is an increased sense of richness and luxury in colouring and composition, and the artists' handling is not so vigorous. Under Shah Jehan architecture reached its zenith, but painting began to decline. This fact may be another illustration of the one art preceding the other, on account of the facility of manipulation. At the same time Shah Jehan's personal predilection for monumental building accounted for this in some degree, as the Taj Mahal eloquently testifies. The quantity of painting executed about this time was maintained, but the quality is slightly inferior. As

the art centred around the court—and this was mainly held at Delhi during the reign of Shah Jehan—the Delhi *kalm* (brush or style) originated, and is a form of the art maintained in a somewhat debased manner to the present day. With the advent of Aurangzeb the decadence of the Mughal school steadily continued, and it is doubtful whether it received much personal encouragement from this bigoted ruler. Among the nobles and courtiers it still had a certain amount of popularity, and in some localities it flourished. But it ceased to receive the all-important stimulus of royal patronage, and accordingly languished. Incidentally Aurangzeb's conquests in Southern India introduced the Mughal style of painting into the Deccan, and we find a southern development of the art displaying certain characteristics which have given it the name of the Deccani *kalm*. This is the only instance of Mughal painting being practised outside that portion of India known as Hindustan. Towards the end of its career one or two families of artists eventually settled at Patna, in Bihar, but their ancestral home was Upper India, until force of circumstances drove them into the Lower Provinces.

After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughal style of painting lingered on under the feeble Emperors who succeeded him, but in a degenerate form. It revived slightly at Lucknow under the Nawabs of Oudh at the end of the eighteenth century, but the work was very inferior. During the nineteenth century what remained of the art became influenced by European pictures, especially miniatures, which found their way into the country at this time. Several of the hereditary artists quickly adapted their style to suit the taste of the 'John Company' merchants, who desired miniature portraits of themselves and their families in the manner of the West. A

number of miniature paintings, executed in a semi-European fashion, have been forthcoming, and indicate the state of this final stage of the art. But before it arrived at this condition, Mughal painting to all intents and purposes was dead, and it ceased to exist in the last years of Aurangzeb, when the dynasty founded by Babar was approaching its dissolution. Originating in the atmosphere of imperial state, its existence depended largely on aristocratic patronage, and when this was withdrawn the end came. Its roots never penetrated to the subsoil of India proper, but as a splendid pictorial record of Mughal pageantry and power it holds a prominent position in the history of Indian painting.

V

THE RAJPUT SCHOOL

A.D. 1550 TO 1900

THE Mughal painting of India being of comparatively recent date, a considerable number of the miniatures of this period are to be seen in public galleries and private collections. Among these, illustrating the different *kalms* or local variations of the art, a certain proportion have been noticed, which are sufficiently distinct in character and intention from the typical Mughal work to suggest an entirely separate school of painting. This particular class of work emanates from two large areas of Northern India, namely, Rajputana and the Punjab Himalayas. This Rajput painting, for that is the title by which it has become designated, is essentially Hindu in expression, and in many aspects demonstrates that it is the indigenous art of India, a direct descendant of the classic frescoes of Ajanta. Older and more profound than the contemporary painting of the Mughals, in order to understand its ancient lineage it is necessary for the moment to retrace our steps to a previous period in the history of this subject.

After the close of the Buddhist period of Indian painting in the seventh century A.D., it has been shown that concrete records of this art are exceedingly rare, so that its progress is not readily observable. History, however, enables us to see the main course it was likely to pursue. A period of political confusion ensued until the rise of the Rajputs in the ninth century. For a time these descendants of the ancient

kings of Gujrat held sway over the greater part of Northern India, but dissensions led to their downfall before the invasions of the Muhammadans. The imprint of their personality and civilisation still remains, and may have been the protective influence which assisted in preserving the traditions of Indian painting almost intact in Rajputana during this period of transition. Traces of an art of fresco painting are to be seen in the medieval palaces of Jeypore, Bikanir, Jodhpur and Udaipur, the homes of the Rajput princes, where it is a living craft to this day. These old examples indicate much individuality, but are mainly decorative, and include elements betokening Persian and, indirectly, Chinese associations. They may be regarded, however, as a visible connecting link between the classic style of the Buddhist period and the later work of the Rajputs. But during this interval of many centuries the renaissance of the Hindu religion had intervened, and Buddhism as a creed had disappeared, taking with it the subject-matter and inspiration of its art. The revived Hinduism brought with it a new order of things—changes in faith and practice. These, although affecting the subsequent artistic character of the Indian people, lie outside the present subject, but the caste basis, the increased interest in mythological literature, the dramatic nature of the temple processions, feasts and festivals, the picturesque ritual of the religion itself, all served to stimulate the æsthetic sense of the people. But the trend of this artistic feeling found its chief expression in the field of industrial arts, sculpture and architecture, rather than in that of painting. The manufacture and embellishment of the many varieties of ceremonial implements and utensils, the innumerable attributes and accessories of the gods, the temple fittings and furniture, all provided steady and constant employment to the hosts of

artizans who flourished during this period. Architecture also received a substantial impetus, as in course of time the two great sects of Vishnu and Shiva gradually evolved, and temples to these two religious systems were being raised in all parts of the country. These buildings were lavishly adorned with the most elaborate sculptures, representing human and superhuman forms. The new theology brought with it the worship of a personal god, and a development of anthropomorphism which is reflected in every aspect of the life of the people. Painted pictures, which largely sufficed for the simpler ritual of the Buddhists, did not satisfy the craving of the Hindus for an actual 'graven image'—a realistic embodyment of their chosen deity. As a consequence, the plastic arts predominated, while painting proportionately declined. Nevertheless, that natural conservatism, which is one of the characteristics of the Indian people, was a means of protecting the pictorial art in certain localities, and there are proofs that the traditions of painting were maintained, although somewhat indistinctly, during these long years of religious reconstruction. Transforming influences were at work, but the original handicraft still lived, and was carried on, in spite of the spiritual and political changes to which the whole country was subjected. And this is the art which eventually emerges out of the darkness of the Middle Ages, and is brought once more into focus under the formative rule of the Mughals.

It is during this rule that indigenous painting, now referred to as Rajput, again comes into view, but the form it took previous to the Mughal dynasty is practically unknown. It is true that a type of book-illustration, associated with Jaina manuscripts of the fifteenth century, is forthcoming, but, interesting though these are, they throw very little real

light on the state of the pictorial art before the appearance of the Mughal school in the following century. Few true examples of Rajput painting earlier than the reign of the Emperor Akbar have been preserved, and historical references to the art previous to this period are rare. In the first years of the eighth century, when the Arab, Muhamad Kasim, was conquering Sind, a contemporary chronicler relates that a deputation of Hindus came to ask if they might paint portraits of him and some of his officers. This reference, although slight, has no little significance, for it emphasises the important place painting occupied in the minds of the people at that time, and that portraiture, always popular in India, was a special feature of the art. Furthermore, it serves to indicate that painting was practised and apparently very highly esteemed in a country under the sway of the Rajputs when this interesting event took place. It is not difficult to see, therefore, that in the extensive tract of country corresponding to the Rajputana of that time, painting was a handicraft of considerable prominence, and, at a later date, Jeypore, one of the leading States of the Rajput confederacy, became a centre of Rajput art. What has been designated the Rajasthani style of Rajput painting is known to Indian painters as the Jeypore *kalm,* and this work has a special character of its own.

From Jeypore, and other cities of Rajputana, these artists eventually gravitated to the vicinity of the Mughal court when this dynasty came into being, the artistic atmosphere which it cultivated naturally attracting many exponents of this craft. Delhi, Agra and Lahore all maintained at different times during the seventeenth century their local styles of painting, much of which was Rajput in its character. Then came the bigotry of the Emperor Aurangzeb, which

disintegrated the artistic community built up by his predecessors, and caused it to scatter in detached units over various parts of the country. As already intimated, Lucknow, Hyderabad (Deccan), and still later Patna in Bengal, besides other cities of the plains, received these families of hereditary painters, who settled down and carried on their art for some generations, their pictures being identified by certain differences in style and technique.

But the most virile offshoot of the Rajput school manifested itself in a group of small States in the Punjab Himalayas, where a distinct style of painting is observable. This work is alluded to by experts as of the 'Kangra *kalm,*' as the leading State was that of Kangra. A broader and more modern view of Indian painting has designated this development as Pahari, or 'belonging to the mountains.' Nurpur, Basohli, Chamba and Jammu, all in close proximity to Kangra, were the homes of these painters, and a considerable amount of work was produced by the artists of these places. Pictures are forthcoming, specially portraits, which date from the middle of the seventeenth century, but it is doubtful whether there are any examples of the Kangra *kalm* earlier than these. It may be only a coincidence, but this date corresponds to the breaking up of the Mughal school in Hindustan, and it is quite possible that certain families of Rajput painters found shelter and patronage in the retreat these valleys afforded, when the Mughal court ceased to give these artists further support. The ripest period of this Kangra painting was under the Katoch Rajas, particularly Sansar Chand, who reigned during the latter part of the eighteenth century, at which time the school received its fullest patronage.

The Kangra *kalm,* or Pahari school, is one of the most interesting facts in connection with the history of painting

in India. In a remote and isolated group of valleys, far removed from any of the great cities of the plains, there lived and flourished for some centuries a community of artists, whose work became known only after the art had almost died out, and when the construction of roads and railways had opened it up to communication. Pahari painting does not denote great inspiration or display any decided expression of thought or feeling. It is an art of patient labour and naïve devotion. Its chief features are delicacy of line, brilliancy of colour, and minuteness of decorative detail.

The work of the Pahari painters was almost entirely executed for a local demand, and was produced under the patronage of the reigning princes. At the order of these chiefs the artists painted portraits of the neighbouring aristocracy in large numbers, and also long series of pictures illustrating the mythological and religious writings of the Hindus. Portraiture was, however, the special feature of the Hill Rajputs, and it is noticeable that most of the features are drawn in exact profile. In Chamba, one of the most artistic of these States, the Raja was often depicted in company with his Rani and heir apparent, a domestic scene not noticed elsewhere. The painting was of the miniature order, as was most of the Rajput work, in this particular resembling the Mughal miniatures of the same period, but distinct in all other characteristics, and in no sense to be confused with this court art of the ruling dynasty of the plains. In the nineteenth century the Pahari artists extended the sphere of their activity, and it is noticeable that a considerable number of their pictures, especially portraits of kings and princes, and historical, religious and mythological subjects, found their way to the large cities of Hindustan. The Sikh court, at Lahore and Amritsar, ruled over by the Maharajah Ranjit

Singh (1803-39), also gave it some encouragement, as there are numerous paintings of Sikh notabilities forthcoming, painted in the Kangra *kalm*. Many of the leading families of the Punjab had collections of Pahari pictures in their possession, and it is more than likely that some members of this community of artists in the hills returned again to work in that part of the country, which had originally maintained their progenitors of a century or so before.

At the close of the nineteenth century the Pahari art shows signs of decline, a harder and less sympathetic treatment taking the place of the soft refined quality which characterised the earlier work. These valleys were also losing their sense of isolation. Intercourse with the outer world became easier as good roads came into existence, and its independent nature began to disappear. The younger generation of these artistic families started to seek their fortunes in other fields, and their hereditary manual skill soon found them remunerative work in the drawing offices of Government departments. The real end of the Kangra *kalm*, as it still continued to struggle on in its pleasant little valleys, came with a tragic suddenness in the early morning of April 4th, 1905, when the great 'Dharmasala' earthquake struck most of this district out of existence, leaving nothing of the prosperous town of Kangra but a mound of ruins. This catastrophe, which killed not only the art but most of the artists, marked the termination of a most interesting development. With it the long-continued course of Rajput painting came to a close, and the passing of this art may be regarded as the last phase of the true indigenous school of painting in India.

VI

THE MODERN SCHOOLS

A.D. 1760 TO 1915

THE close of the Mughal dynasty, in A.D. 1760, found the art of painting in India in a state of decay. In Delhi and Lucknow a number of artists still carried on their profession, but their productions were largely degenerate copies of the old art. The painters of the former city gradually evolved a style of miniature portraiture, which at the present time has some small popularity. A few Muhammadan families continue to produce this class of work, which consists mainly of representations of members of the Mughal dynasty, conventional likenesses of no great artistic merit. These craftsmen are descendants of the original painters of the Mughal school, and still observe a few of the traditions of that art. Their materials and technique were, until a few years ago, of the ancient indigenous type, and they recall some features of the medieval painting of India. Some of the older Delhi miniatures, executed about fifty years ago, generally on ivory, express a certain amount of feeling and quality, but as a whole the modern Delhi painting cannot be considered a high form of art.

During the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, a characteristic style of painting was practised in Lucknow, manifesting some of the attractive qualities of the old school, but, unfortunately, much impregnated with inferior European influence. Portraiture was the main theme, and the actual likenesses were often successfully

rendered. But the accessories indicate an ostentation, and a want of taste, typical of the State of Oudh at that time. Executed with all the technical care of the medieval miniatures of the last period, they are spoilt by the vulgarity of their setting and the strained and debased treatment of the whole conception.

Rajput painting also at this time was evidently declining. Nevertheless, in some of the retreats of the Punjab Hill States, where the medieval system of living still prevailed, painting of an excellent character was being executed well into the nineteenth century. In the Punjab, at Lahore and Amritsar, the productions of several Sikh painters found favour at the end of the nineteenth century, their work showing a strange mixture of the East and West. One, Kapur Singh, painted a large number of figure subjects, miniature in size, and showing a very fair knowledge of drawing with considerable action.

A few families of hereditary artists about this period began to settle in Patna, in Bengal, where they developed a distinct style of painting, hard and unfeeling, yet of certain merit. For a time some of these painters received patronage from the early European merchants and Anglo-Indians, who encouraged them to produce miniature portraits in a semi-European manner. Many of these have survived, and indicate a curiously composite style, illustrative of the state of the art in the early years of 'John Company.'

In the South of India the art of painting progressed on lines somewhat different from the North. A Persian style of work was practised in the Deccan as early as the sixteenth century, having probably been introduced by the Turkoman founders of the various Muhammadan States which flourished at that time. The earlier examples denote a Timurid origin,

but later the work evinced a character similar to the Mughal painting in the Delhi style, although it continued to display certain minor features which distinguish it from this Northern development of the art. It is more than possible that the school was reinforced by families of painters from Hindustan, brought to the Deccan by Aurangzeb's forced immigration, or who had naturally wandered there when the Mughal school lost its patronage. The productions of the painters of Aurangabad and Daulatabad in the eighteenth century are smaller than the Northern work, and lacking in breadth of treatment, while their subject-matter is generally semi-historical, being associated with the various rulers in the Deccan at this period. Descendants of these artists are still to be found living at Hyderabad and Nekonda.

Further south there are records of the art, which, on the one hand, may indicate that it had a separate existence, while on the other, tradition associates it with the painting of Northern India. Tara Nath makes a brief reference to painting 'in the south,' and mentions by name three artists, Jaya, Parojay, and Vijaya, who had many followers. The date of these is unknown. At a comparatively late period we find the art resolved into the two separate schools of Tanjore and Mysore.

The Tanjore artists are stated locally to have come originally from Hindustan, in the reign of Raja Sarabhoji, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Being Hindus, this suggests that they were a branch of the Rajput school, which, broken up during the decline of the Mughal dynasty, gradually drifted south until it came under the artistic protection of the Tanjore court, and, under royal encouragement, eventually developed into a local school. Originally its artists were few in number, but these gradually increased,

and during the reign of Sivaji (1833-55), the last of the Tanjore rajas, there were eighteen families all doing excellent painting on ivory and wood. The later form of the art is similar to the 'jarah' of Northern India, and consisted of a water-colour painting on wood, but heavily gilt and encrusted with precious stones or paste gems. These artists were also responsible for a number of large portraits in oils, some actual life size, a collection of which may be seen in the Tanjore palace and the old palace at Pudukottah.

With the death of Sivaji, and the end of the dynasty, the royal patronage ceased and the school dispersed. Most of the painters then took up other kinds of art handicrafts, some becoming goldsmiths, while others engaged in the art of working in sola pith, an industry of some reputation in Southern India. A few families still cling to their ancestral art, and execute 'bazaar' pictures of religious subjects much appreciated by the local Hindus. These paintings have little artistic merit, being embellished with much gilding and many paste gems, but are thoroughly good in workmanship. When in its prime the Tanjore school specialised mainly in portraiture, painted on ivory, which, for miniatures, were large in size, some of them being over six inches long. The art was distinctly local, as it is rare to find any of the personages depicted not immediately associated with the court of Tanjore, although a few portraits of Pudukottah celebrities are forthcoming.

The other southern development of the art—the Mysore school of painting—reached its highwater mark under the rule of Raja Krishnaraja Wodeyar, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Previous to this, however, the school is known to have been a flourishing one for more than a hundred years. Under the personal supervision of Krishna-

PLATE 8



'ABHISARIKA,' BY ABANINDRA NATH TAGORE (MODERN BENGALI SCHOOL).

PLATE 9



'THE JUMPING JACK.' ABANINDRA NATH TAGORE (MODERN BENGALI SCHOOL).

raja the court artists enjoyed a great reputation, and it is recorded that this raja's keenest delight lay in encouraging the painters to compete one against the other in depicting some subject selected by this royal connoisseur. Like the Tanjore artists, they executed much portraiture on ivory, a collection of which was displayed in the Mysore palace. On the death of Krishnaraja, in 1868, these artists were dispersed and the school became extinct.

From the foregoing the condition of painting in India towards the end of the nineteenth century may be realised. It will be seen that the art generally was approaching the final stage in its downward course, and that its degeneration was almost complete. This state is not an unfavourable one for an æsthetic revival. The advent of a new spirit may quicken it again into artistic life. And in the last decade of the century signs of this spirit are observable—for a small but earnest group of Bengali painters, grasping the situation, have joined themselves together with the intention of endeavouring to resuscitate Indian painting and of rescuing it from the degradation into which it has drifted. The leader of this art movement is Abanindra Nath Tagore, a member of a talented family, which has distinguished itself in other fields of learning. Around him he has gathered, by virtue of his keen artistic instincts and magnetic personality, a small school of young painters, whose work is already producing considerable effect. The first step taken by these reformers has necessarily been a retrogressive one. They contend that the recent art of the country, in assimilating, as it had been doing, the elements of the Occident, is pursuing a doubtful course, and that a return journey must be made, back to the point where it began to lose its traditional character. Its members, therefore, have sought out the old historic painting

of the past, the frescoes of Ajanta and Sigiriya, the religious banners of Tibet, and the miniatures of the best artists of the Mughal and Rajput schools, and on the results acquired from a study of these and other masterpieces of Oriental art, the new movement has been founded.

The work of the artists comprising this new school is not a slavish imitation of any of these historic styles, or a composite creation based on the whole. On the contrary, their productions display an originality which is a definite assurance of each individual's personal aspirations after a preconceived ideal. If each picture is regarded separately, it is possible to detect traces of several influences—Japanese in this example, or Persian in that—but, taken as a whole, the work of this movement manifests a genuine desire on the part of the artist to interpret in colour his imaginative conceptions, and to reproduce these in the indigenous style and by means of traditional methods. The subjects selected are largely illustrative of divine philosophy, as this is presented in the classical literature of the country. Scenes are taken from the writings of Kalidas, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* the *Gītā* and the *Purāṇas,* and incidents of ancient Indian history. The pictures are almost invariably small, as were the folio paintings of the Mughals to which they bear some similarity ; it will be realised, therefore, that in the formation of this school a practical effort has been made to bring about a revival of Indian painting, in the style in which this art was practised during its best periods.

The earnestness of these artists is undoubtedly a great asset, but whether this is a sufficiently stable basis on which to build up a national revival remains to be seen. Art—and by this is ordinarily understood painting, sculpture and the allied handicrafts—is but the handmaid of architecture,

which has been the foundation of all great æsthetic movements since history began. A powerful creative spirit is an essential quality, if the specific end at which these artists have aimed is to be attained. The study and practice of architecture, together with the correlated arts of sculpture and painting, appears desirable, in order that the movement may develop a constructive character sufficient to sustain it in its course. Some efforts in this direction are being made, and the subject will no doubt be treated in its broadest aspect as the school gains in strength.

But modern painting in India has not all assumed this special form, and there are other artists, apart from those associated with the new movement, whose work has achieved some reputation. Oil and water-colour painting, as carried on in the West, have been carefully studied by certain individuals, in both Indian and European art schools, in some cases with considerable success, although there is undoubtedly much work of this nature which is only mediocre in quality.

Viewed generally, however, the condition of painting in India at the present time is not satisfactory. On the one hand is the new movement, which is appreciated by all except those to whom it is primarily addressed—for so far it has made a more successful appeal to the European than to the Indian. On the other hand is the work of the student of Western oil painting, whose productions find considerable favour among those of his own community. The art is, therefore, undergoing a transition, during which the two modes are struggling for supremacy. But the country and its arts have endured these æsthetic conflicts before, and history has more than once proved that these are but the natural prelude to a period of artistic regeneration. While the new

movement is, therefore, a most welcome sign, it is clear that a still more progressive step towards the attainment of this would be some real indication of an intelligent improvement in public taste. The æsthetic sense of the Indian people, for the time being, is deficient, and the elevation of this consciousness to a higher level is necessary before any appreciable advance can be recorded. The new movement is a beginning, but this must be reciprocated by a genuine improvement in taste, initiated by the cultured classes of the country. When these two forces actually move in unison, a revival of the art of India may not be far distant.

PART II

DESCRIPTION OF INDIAN PAINTING

VII

THE BUDDHIST FRESCOES

THE frescoes in the Buddhist cave-temples at Ajanta, and in the excavations at Sigiriya and Bagh, may be regarded as holding the same position in relation to Indian painting that the works of the 'Old Masters' bear to the art of Europe. But their influence is not only confined to India, for there are indications that these Buddhist mural pictures were a source of inspiration to artists all over the East. The importance, therefore, of a close study of these classical productions will be understood.

A brief history of the Buddhist school has been already outlined in Chapter II ; the following is a description of the various groups of frescoes connected with this form of Indian art. The paintings at Ajanta, which comprise the major portion of the surviving work of this period, may be first dealt with. Regarded as a whole, it is the great scheme and grandeur of these frescoes which first appeals to the onlooker, and it is the consummation of these qualities that has placed them on the high artistic plane they occupy in relation to Eastern art. The largeness of the parts, the simplicity of the treatment, and the breadth of the conception stamp these frescoes as the work of a school of great artists.

Although the compositions are large in extent, the majority of the figures in the painting are less than life size. But the principal characters in most of the designs are in heroic proportions, and these have been described as equalling in

grandeur the colossal statues of the Egyptian kings. Centrality is one of the main features of the composition, so that attention is at once drawn to the most important person in each scene. The dignified and noble aspect of these beings has been most graphically rendered, and this in itself is one of the finest achievements of the Buddhist artists. Posed in impressive and stately attitudes, the contours of these figures are superb, and reveal a keen perception of the beauty of form. There is no undue striving after academic or anatomical exactitude, the drawing is spontaneous and unrestrained. Each figure naturally falls into its correct place, and unaffectedly takes its right position in the general composition. In sentiment the art is intensely emotional, uplifting the observer by its forceful expressiveness.

This is the character of the Ajanta frescoes as a whole. Regarded more in detail the scenes, as already mentioned, mainly illustrate the *Jātakas*—incidents from the previous lives of the Buddha. At the same time there is evidence that some of them are largely secular in subject, and apparently represent the doings of kings and the court-life of the time. The general atmosphere of the Ajanta paintings suggests an earthly paradise, containing sacred palaces and peopled with semi-divine beings. The stories illustrated are continuous, such as may be observed in the wall decoration of Italy in the Middle Ages.

But the chief characteristic of the art of Ajanta, and, in fact, all Oriental painting, lies in its adaptation of line. The painting of the East is largely an art of line, and nowhere has this been better exemplified than in the Buddhist painting of India. The art of many countries owes much of its effect to the masterly employment of simple outline. What could be finer than the linear draftsmanship on Greek vases, or

PLATE 10



FRESCO IN CAVE I, AJANTA, PROBABLY ILLUSTRATING 'THE GREAT RENUNCIATION' (SEVENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 11



FRESCO IN CAVE 17, AJANTA, ILLUSTRATING THE *MAHĀ HAMSA JĀTAKA* (SIXTH CENTURY). FROM 'AJANTA FRESCOES,' INDIA SOCIETY.

(*See page* 76.)

the expressive drawing of Holbein ; but no art relies more on this quality than the Buddhist frescoes. The painter knew how to qualify and gradate his outline so as to give it every degree of expression. Not only do these frescoes represent his visualisation of a rounded object translated into line, but his actual treatment of this line is so subtle and experienced that by its varying quality and sympathetic utterance it embodies modelling, values, relief, foreshortening and all the essential elements of the art. It is doubtful whether any artist has equalled the Buddhist painter in his capacity for analysing and complexities of the human form and then rendering in his picture what is essential by means of a simple line. Strong, confident and emphatic in its meaning, this method of artistic interpretation was utilised with consummate skill by the painters of this classic age. An excellent example illustrating this characteristic may be studied in Cave 1, considered to be one of the latest of the excavations. On the left of the shrine is a figure, presumably Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, or possibly illustrating 'The Great Renunciation,' where the Prince Siddhartha departs from his palace previous to seeking Buddhahood. This figure is large—over life size—stooping slightly and holding in the right hand a blue lotus flower. It is in its expression of sorrow, in its feeling of profound pity, that this great work of art excels ; and in studying it the observer realises that he is face to face with a noble being bending under the weight of a tragic decision ; the bitterness of renouncing for ever a life of bliss is blended with a yearning sense of hope in the happiness of the future.

In treatment this figure approaches the school of Botticelli in the absence of foreshortening and in the reduction of the modelling to the lowest terms. The strong direct drawing

of the shoulders and arms is masterly in its unaffected simplicity, while the quality of the outline suggests the form with the least possible labour. Clean and clear on its outer edge, on its inner margin, where it is required to express the feeling of flesh, it is skilfully softened, and the effect of roundness is obtained without effort. The face is replete with depth and tenderness, the whole of which has been secured by a few carefully considered lines, qualified and shaded in places or blended when necessary by a few simple half-tones. The eyebrows, upon which depends much of the facial expression, are drawn in one simple wave-line ; but in its simplicity of intention this single brushform represents in itself the handling of a great craftsman, the genius of a master-mind.

The scene of which the above is the central figure may be accepted as one of the most representative of all the frescoes of the Buddhist period. In the subsidiary portions of this composition, such as the grouping of the lesser personages, a great refinement and harmony of form is attained. The single figures express a sense of rhythm and of graceful movement aiding considerably in the beauty of the conception as a whole. And in the hand of the principal character is the blue lotus, symbolising much, and probably the clue to the artist's underlying ideal. For only the sinuous curves of the lotus stem, the spring of the petals, or the languid grace of the leaves, as they float on the water, can have inspired shapes and forms like these. Contrast the full-blown treatment of portions of the design with the exquisite modulation in other parts, the restrained rendering of the queen on the right in comparison with the vitality and action of the aerial creature above ; as one realises the deep significance of these qualities, the passionate intensity of the artist-priest becomes discernible, as, controlled by mental

discipline and guided by refined taste, his hand portrayed with unerring skill the high abstractions of his creed.

From a study of form we may pass to the scheme of colour employed in the Ajanta frescoes. Time and other causes have destroyed much of the delicacy of tone and tint once displayed in these paintings, but enough remains to enable a reconstruction to be made of the colour motif, as this may have appeared fifteen hundred years ago. Then the depth and volume of the colour would have been a joy indeed, as the brilliant blues and greens against the dark rich purples appeared in their full strength, and the flesh tints and brightly-hued costumes glowed in the picture. Low-toned and blackened surfaces alone are all that remain of this once gorgeous effect, and from these indistinct monochromes it is necessary to re-create the original colour scheme.

As a whole, except for some of the earlier painting in Cave 9, the general idea of the Buddhist artist was to represent his group of figures as a light mass against a darker background. This system was not by any means invariable, but it is the usual treatment observable in the Ajanta frescoes. Occasionally an effective passage was attained by introducing one or more figures of a group in a rich dark tone against some lighter portion of the distance, a method also followed with considerable success in the West by some of the painters of the Venetian school. The Buddhist artist was well aware of the importance of attracting attention to the features of his subjects, and he unobtrusively obtained the desired result by the use of an emphatic black in the hair, thus framing the face, a plan which adds not a little to the animated character of some of the figures.

An instance of the artist's appreciation of colour may be studied in one of the frescoes in Cave 17, the subject of which

is the *Mahā Haṁsa Jātaka.* This birth-tale relates that Queen Khema has a dream about golden geese and entreats Samyama, the king, to find one for her. By means of a decoy the royal fowler entrusted with this task captures the goose-king, who is deserted by all his subjects except one, Sumukha, his chief captain. The two prisoners are brought before King Samyama, who treats them with great honour, and, after the goose-king has preached the Law to him, permits them both to return to their home on the slopes of Chittrakuta, the bright peak. To complete this *Jātaka* in the words of the chronicler, 'The Master here ended his story, and identified the Birth: at that time the fowler was Channa, Queen Khema was the nun Khema, the king was Sariputta, the king's retinue the followers of Buddha, Sumukha was Ananda, and the goose-king was myself' (Cowell).

This narrative, so picturesquely presented, affords an excellent opportunity for the painter, and he takes full advantage of it. The fresco depicts the king seated in state, surrounded by attendants, one of whom holds the imperial umbrella, another a fly-whisk, while a third, by his colour, is evidently a negro slave. Sitting a little below the king is an individual whose flesh colouring is a strong red, undoubtedly the royal fowler giving his version of the incident. But the interest of the entire group is concentrated with most telling intensity on the two geese enthroned in the middle. It seems quite likely that the hanging canopy above has been specially erected by the king as one of the signs of his respect for the royal bird beneath. A richly-decorated screen, or *kanāt,* acts as a background to the whole, as well as signifying the private character of the proceedings. At the king's feet is a dark-coloured menial, an aborigine, apparently corroborating the story of the capture ; the same individual

is observable on the 'return' of the adjacent pilaster, holding in his hands a pair of geese, while others which have escaped his snare fly away overhead. The foreground is occupied by what may be a lake containing pink lotus flowers and other aquatic plants, among which disport water birds, probably symbolical of the freedom of the wild fowl.

The colour scheme of this fresco is a very charming one, and typical of the Buddhist school at its best. The flesh painting is largely a combination of delicate pinks and greys. Some of the figures, however, are of terra-verte colour—the *sang sabz* of the Indian painter, which has led to the supposition that for certain individuals conventional tints were demanded. But this effect is due to the action of time, which has worn away the superimposed flesh-colour, exposing the under painting of terra-verte, as has been frequently noticed in early Italian frescoes. The method of the Buddhist artist was first to model his figure in a cool 'grisaille,' subsequently glazing his flesh tint over this, and so leading to a final effect of a warm translucent grey. This process, however, does not apply to the negro or the deep-red complexion of the fowler in the particular scene under description. In this picture the lightly-toned figures are grouped against a dark-green atmospheric background, shading almost to black down below. Over this, small objects in broken colour are painted so that the effect though strong is not exaggerated. The lower part of the picture is mainly a scheme of harmonious greens, relieved by passages of white and soft red. In its details this fresco is executed in the firm but delicate method of the style, the draperies, jewellery, flowers and other accessories being most daintily rendered. Apart, however, from its colouring, this picture is a typical example of the Buddhist school in its most dramatic mood. The attention of the

beholder is at once drawn to the display of concentrated interest on the faces of all concerned. The story illustrated is, in itself, an intensely moving one, and the nature of the dialogue taking place between the king and the royal bird is reflected in the expressive looks of the company. The fowler has made his report, which has been confirmed by the aborigine below, and now sits more or less unaffected by what follows. The monarch shows his deep concern at the goose-king's recital, while the feeling of sensational movement among the attendants indicates the absorbing nature of the proceedings.

One of the great achievements of the Buddhist artist is to be observed in his treatment of gesture, especially in the expressive action of the hands. It has been remarked that perhaps late Roman work can show a similar feeling of movement, but only Renaissance Italian the same grace of gesture. The hands of the figures in the Ajanta frescoes have a special character, refined high-caste fingers quivering with nervous vitality, and so designed as to take an important part in the telling of the story.

With the Hindus, the *mudrā,* or symbolism of the hands, is a profound subject, and is found occupying a prominent position in all spheres of Indian art. It forms a study in itself, every pose of the hand, every movement of the finger, having a particular significance. In the Buddhist frescoes a somewhat similar object is discernible, these members, full of animation, are made to express a 'finger-language' of their own. A scene in Cave 1, representing an incident of court-life, is remarkable on account of the suggestive actions of the hands. The gift of bestowing actual speech was denied to the painter, but all that goes to form a spoken language is seen in the gestures he gave to his figures. The subtle turn

of the wrist, the flexing of a finger, the two hands firmly brought together, the opening of the palm, and innumerable other graceful combinations, all have their meaning, deprecating, affirming or supplicating according to the needs of the story illustrated. Where no actual expression was required the same pleasing treatment is discernible, such as the hand waving a fly-whisk, holding a flower, or carrying a vessel, each depicting a refinement of drawing which has rarely been excelled. The hands of the musicians presented an exceptional opportunity for the artist in this connection, a maiden beating time with the *karatāl*, or cymbal, suggesting a regulative chiming by a play of the fingers that can be clearly felt.

The same careful attention to these details may be observed in the Sigiriya frescoes, where the hands holding flowers, fruit, or musical instruments are most gracefully rendered. In each case the actual pose of the hand has been well considered—the artists' alterations in the position of some of these are still visible—while the long tapering fingers are beautifully drawn and designed.

In draftsmanship generally the Sigiriya fresco is freer and loser than the Ajanta work, but denotes the same masterly knowledge. The line is an equally expressive and confident sweep of the brush, but has been applied with an *abandon* that is startling in its impulsiveness. The entire scheme proclaims the work of an artist of strong individuality, especially in the boldness of the handling. In the modelling of the figures this is particularly noticeable, the brushwork being as spontaneous as the chisel marks on sculpture.

VIII

THE MUGHAL MINIATURES

A LARGE proportion of the miniature paintings of the Mughals are portraits, but at the same time the subjects of an appreciable quantity of the work of this school are of a general order. These are mainly scenes from actual life, hunting and fighting, battles and sieges, historical episodes, durbars, mythological stories, zoology and botany, and very occasionally religious incidents. There is no mysticism, and rarely pictures of domestic life. Muhammadanism, unlike Hinduism which was the mainspring of the contemporary Rajput painting, had, fundamentally, no association with pictorial art, and regarded broadly as a religion was antagonistic to much of the painting of the Mughals. But the keen artistic temperament of the Emperors, so admirably sustained right through the dynasty, from Babar to Shah Jehan, overcame any religious scruples, and although these august individuals bowed to the stern decrees of their creed as far as religious art subjects were concerned, they revelled in representations of actual fact. The Mughal was no mystic, but a practical hard-headed individual, with a curb on his imagination and a ready gift for taking an interest in the picturesque pageants that went on around him. His domestic life, as this was behind the veil, was very rarely represented, and his religion, although more public than any other, was above the plane of the pictorial.

The earliest pictures associated with this school are of a

PLATE 12



INDO-PERSIAN PICTURE (SIXTEENTH CENTURY).

special type, and must be regarded as entirely of foreign workmanship. This class of painting in India is not particularly rare. A few figure in almost every representative collection of Mughal miniatures ; but they are always referred to by Indian experts as of the 'Irani *kalm*,' that is, in the style of Iran (see Plate 12). These pictures may be directly connected with one or other of the phases of the Timurid school of painting, which flourished in Persia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In general character these Indo-Persian pictures, for such they may be designated, are notably conventional, especially so in the treatment of the figures, but the details of the background, if this is a landscape, reveal a close acquaintance with trees and flowers. This feature runs through the whole of the work of this and the allied schools. It is in colour, however, that this early type of picture excels, being usually a beautiful mosaic of reds and blues and gold, an effect scintillating in the hues of the Orient. The blue, like the blue of a sunlit sky, or the distant hills after rain, is the lapis-lazuli, and this is the chief feature of the colour scheme. The other characteristics of this style are the minuteness of the treatment, the decorative composition, the extremely fine and 'short' outline, the free use of gold on costumes and background, and the application of elaborately-designed patterns to the garments' trappings and accessories.

Such is the general style of the early Indo-Persian picture, but the true Mughal miniature, which succeeded this, is a different conception. The conventional mosaic illustration imported from Iran passed away, and the art began to assume a distinctive character, the result of the influence of an Indian environment upon the Mughals. These true Mughal productions evince more freedom and realism than

the preceding work, and as the style progressed its independent nature became assured. The union of the Persian and Rajput art thus resulted in an offspring—the Mughal miniature—in which the features of the parental arts are discernible, but as a whole it displays an individuality entirely its own. This is due to the fact that the art has absorbed the Indian atmosphere, it has become a part of India itself. Not that the Mughal style even professed to represent the emotions of the Indian people, as Rajput painting undoubtedly did: but at the same time it was nourished on Indian soil and reflected this in most of its aspects.

The Mughal miniature is distinguished from any other style of Indian painting by one feature which at once proclaims its foreign origin. This is the calligraphic character of its outlines. In Persia on the one side, and China on the other, an ideagraphic method of brushwork has profoundly influenced the handling and methods of expression of the painter. Distinct traces of the same quality are observable in the brushwork of the Mughal artists, and in this sense alone these miniatures stand apart from all other forms of Indian painting.

In contrast to the Indo-Persian painting, the chief characteristics of the Mughal miniatures are the introduction of modelling by means of delicate shading, and an indigenous interpretation of perspective. The surface modelling at first is sparingly used, but as the style advanced this effect becomes more marked, and is a distinct advance on the flat 'tesserae' treatment seen in the pictures of the Irani *kalm*. In the treatment of backgrounds, such as trees and landscape, instead of the decorative design of the older school a more natural representation of distance and atmosphere is attempted with considerable success. Aerial

perspective is realised, and the various planes of the landscape depicted are carefully composed. Some of the artists of the Mughal school had a remarkable feeling for foreshortening, and, although this is not a feature of the majority of the pictures, that it was understood and put into practice with great skill is occasionally noticeable. A battle scene in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, illustrates this in a striking manner, a band of horse soldiers passing obliquely across the foreground of the picture indicating a knowledge of grouping and a sense of foreshortening reminiscent of Paolo Uccello, the first student of perspective in Italy in the fifteenth century.

A keen appreciation of nature was also a characteristic of the Mughal artist, and this was fostered by the court, especially by the Emperor Jehangir. It is not difficult to see that in this respect the mantle of Babar had fallen on the shoulders of his great-grandson, for it would be difficult to find a closer observer of nature's handiwork than the founder of the Mughal dynasty. Jehangir specially commissioned some of his court artists to make copies of any rare birds and animals which were brought to the capital, and an interesting zoological portfolio was the result. Some of these pictures have survived to the present day, and indicate the fidelity with which the royal command was obeyed. Probably the best illustration of the series was that of a turkey-cock, which is preserved in the Indian Museum ; the colour and spirited drawing, besides the reality of the detail, show the artist in this branch of work at his best. A florican and a ram belonging to this folio have also survived, and in quality are little below the preceding. But the sumptuous nature of this rare collection is emphasised by the mounting of the pictures, the border designs being a complete work of art in themselves. This form of embellishment by

means of a broad border of foliated design is common in the Mughal miniature, but seems to have been specially developed by the artists of Jehangir's court. Its counterpart may be seen in the lapidary work of the Taj at Agra, and other buildings of this period decorated with an inlay of precious stones, for the two arts are similar in colour and design, though differing in technique. For the picture border is composed of sprays of flowering plants conventionally arranged around the picture, and thus framing it in a delightful design of broken colour, while the whole is carefully arranged to harmonise with the central colour scheme. Butterflies and birds are sometimes introduced, and it is difficult to imagine a richer or more glowing work of pictorial art than one of these flower-framed miniatures of the Jehangir court painters. The plants ordinarily represented in these borders are poppies, wild strawberries, jonquils, lilies, iris, marguerites, and similar common flowers of the hills and plants, but sometimes these are so conventionalised as to become difficult to identify.

Incidents of the chase were favourite subjects for the brush of the Mughal artist, and no doubt these were executed at the express command of his royal patron, who desired to have some permanent record of his prowess in the field of sport. Jehangir rarely allowed any hunting adventure to pass without a picture being painted of the most thrilling moment of the day. The pursuit of the maneless lion of India, which animal was much more common then than now, is the subject of several pictures, in one of which the imperial sportsman seems to have had a very narrow escape. It is not easy to see how a serious result was avoided, as the lion is clinging to the back of the frenzied elephant, and only kept out of the howdah by means of the empty firearm of the

Emperor. The matter undoubtedly ended satisfactorily, as a mounted attendant is seen approaching with a lance, but on the other hand another servant is jumping out of the howdah and leaving his august master to his fate in most craven fashion. The last is evidently a little touch of pictorial sarcasm which could have been founded only on actual fact. In all these jungle scenes the landscape is rendered with great feeling, the distant hills, and the nearer 'cover' in which the animal has been located, being depicted with a knowledge of nature which is unrivalled. The palm tree framed against the sky, or the fleshy-leaved plantain with its purple flower hanging heavily under its fronds, the golden plane tree, or the young red shoots of the mango, and all the numerous trees and shrubs of the garden or forest are to be readily identified in the carefully executed pictures of the Mughal school.

The paintings of this school resolve themselves into various styles or *kalms,* all of which have distinguishing features mainly of technique. The Delhi *kalm* is the most common, and may be said to represent the classical aspect of the school. In workmanship it is crisp and clear in its outlines, as distinct from the other principal development of the art, called the Jeypore *kalm,* which is soft and rounded in execution. The Jeypore *kalm* shows a striving after surface modelling by means of shading, but this work must not be confused with pictures from the same centre which are obviously of the Rajput school. Miniatures in the Lucknow *kalm* are similar to the Delhi ones, although inferior in quality to the works of that leading style. There is also a considerable difference in technique, the Lucknow treatment being less opaque, in fact, not infrequently the actual figures are painted in almost pure water colour, although white, as a 'body,' is used more

freely in the background. The Deccani *kalm* is an interesting development, and pictures in this style are identified by their small character, both in actual size and also in treatment generally. Gold is freely used, and in richness of effect it is even more splendid than the Delhi *kalm*, to which it is very closely allied. The Patna *kalm* was a later style of work, and flourished in Bihar and Bengal in the nineteenth century. It is good in drawing, but hard in its general effect. The colour scheme is crude, but in workmanship it still retained many of the finer qualities of the Delhi style at its best. A Kashmir *kalm* is occasionally alluded to, and refers to a type of picture which was originally painted in Kashmir, but later indicates a form of the painting carried on by Kashmiris who had settled in Lahore, Amritsar and other towns in the Punjab. The Irani *kalm* has been already described, but there is another foreign style of work which has obtained the name of Rumi, or European. Miniatures denoting Western influence are classed under this head, especially some of the painting executed in Oudh, when the Mughal dynasty had begun to totter. This term is not used, however, with regard to Indian miniatures depicting European subjects or illustrative of the Christian religion, which, quite early in the history of the Mughal school, were not uncommon. Pictures of this type were generally painted in the Delhi or Jeypore *kalms*, and represent an aspect of the Mughal school of special interest. They were executed either by royal command for the edification of the Mughal court, often from European originals, or were prepared to the order of some of the Jesuit priests in their work of introducing Christianity into the country.

IX

PORTRAITURE UNDER THE MUGHALS

ALTHOUGH portraiture was a special feature of the painting of the Mughal period, it was also an art of considerable popularity in India from very remote times. It is related that during the lifetime of the Buddha, when Ajatasatru desired a portrait of the Master, he allowed his shadow to fall on a piece of cloth, and then this shape was filled in with colour. This suggests an early employment of the silhouette, which, as a process, may have some connection with the portraiture of the Mughal artists, who almost invariably depicted the features in exact profile. The favourite incident in the ancient legends of the country of the almost miraculous gift of certain people in 'seizing a likeness' has already been referred to. There is also some evidence that portraiture is to be found in the Buddhist frescoes, an example being the paintings at Sigiriya, in Ceylon, which are presumed to represent the features of King Kasyapa's queens. If the scenes in Cave 1 at Ajanta really depict Khusru Parviz and King Pulakesin, these may also be regarded as within the sphere of portraiture ; the picture supposed to represent the former, on the ceiling of this cave, certainly suggests the likeness of a specific person. Any portraiture that may be accepted as such, in the Buddhist frescoes, is idealistic in its character, but many of the figures there represented are well-known characters in the Buddhist scriptures, and although treated ideally they are the embodiments of the particular personality intended by the artist.

In a monastery at Gyantse, in Tibet, there is a Buddhist fresco of ancient date in which the pride of the painter in his art was so great, that, as a finishing feature to his work, he introduced into one portion of the design a portrait of himself, a likeness of exceptional interest, the face being remarkable for its character and expression. This painting was, of course, executed centuries later than that of Ajanta, but the style is so similar that these frescoes might well have been the work of the same hand.

The particular reference to the portraiture of the Hindus, already alluded to, which appears to have flourished in Sind in the eighth century (see page 57), indicates the important position this art held in the people's estimation at a period in history when information on this subject generally is singularly meagre.

A few examples of early medieval portraits have been forthcoming in connection with the Mughal school, which are no doubt of direct foreign origin, being probably Southern Persian work. They display the sinuous treatment, both in composition and outline, characterising the work of Sultan Mahommad, and his contemporaries of the Timurid school, who flourished in Persia towards the middle of the sixteenth century. Specimens of this style of painting may be seen among collections of Indian pictures, but they were either brought over by Mughal connoisseurs, or painted in India by Persian artists retained at the imperial court during the first years of the Mughal dynasty. Plate 12 is an illustration of this type of miniature. Sultan Mahommad was a painter who studied under Bihzad, the great master of Persian art, and these examples of his school found in India are rare and very interesting.

The records of Mughal portraiture in India show that

some of its leading artists were Hindus, such as Bhagwati and Hunar. The former was an early exponent in the sixteenth century ; the latter flourished somewhat later. It is not clear whether these two individuals were the descendants of hereditary Hindu portrait painters, or were the result of the demand of the Mughal emperors for skilled artists in this branch of art. Bhagwati's style was obviously almost pure Persian, in fact, he has been described as 'clearly one of those Hindu painters who worked slavishly in a foreign tradition' ; but Hunar was of the Rajput school. In fact, the productions of the latter are so Indian in feeling as to suggest that he was one of a hereditary line of Hindu artists, only connected by circumstance with the Mughal school.

This reference may serve to indicate the mixed origin of Mughal portraiture, which, as a distinct art, becomes observable in India at the latter end of the sixteenth century. From this time it speedily developed, and soon became a feature of the painting of the time, owing to the encouragement it received from the Mughal court. For it is stated in the *Āin-i-Ākbari* that 'His Majesty himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed: those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them.'

It was left, however, to the Emperor Jehangir to show the keenest personal interest in the productions of the portrait painter, and the royal dilettante prided himself not a little on the skill of the artists employed at his court. Sir Thomas Roe relates the story of the Emperor having five copies of a certain portrait made by one of his court painters, and was childishly amused because the ambassador could not immediately distinguish the original from the copies. 'You

confesse hee is a good workman,' said Jehangir, 'send for him home, and shew him such toyes as you haue, and let him choose one in requitall whereof you shall choose any of these copies to shew in England. We are not so unskilfull as you esteem us, so he pressed me to choose one, which I did ; the king wrapping it up in a paper, and putting it up in a little booke of mine, deliuered it with much joy and exultation of his man's supposed victory.'

Francois Bernier, the French physician at the court of a later monarch, Aurangzeb, although much struck by the excellent quality of the portrait painting, was at the same time inclined to be severely critical, and says, 'The Indian painters are chiefly deficient in just proportions and in the expression of the face,' adding in a somewhat superior manner, 'but these defects would soon be corrected if they possessed good masters, and were instructed in the rules of the art.'

A study of representative examples of Mughal miniatures proves at once that the artist of that time was possessed of a marked natural gift for portraiture. The not altogether unpleasing vanity of the Mughal aristocrats encouraged this, and the interest that these individuals took in themselves and their own performances caused this branch of art to be a flourishing one.

The commonest examples of portraiture, although not necessarily the best, are those of the rulers of the Mughal dynasty. Members of the royal line are almost always distinguished by a golden halo, besides other insignia of their high degree. It is not unusual for pictures to have been painted displaying two or three succeeding emperors of the dynasty seated together, and similar situations not historically correct ; but as a rule the artist confined himself to a



MUGHAL PORTRAIT. THE EMPEROR SHAH JEHAN (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 14



'A MUGHAL MADONNA.' A CHRISTIAN SUBJECT BY A MUGHAL ARTIST

representation of a single figure standing on a green sward carpeted with flowers, with a background of blended colours in which a pleasing shade of terra-verte often predominates. The rich brocades and cloths of gold which formed the usual costume of the Mughal aristocracy, presented the artist with excellent opportunities for brilliant schemes of mosaic colouring, and he further heightened his glowing effects by picking out the accessories with burnished gold. Occasionally the diaphanous draperies of the hot weather were introduced, through the transparent folds of which the form of the limbs is seen. The figure is frequently represented as a dark scheme against a light neutral-tinted or almost colourless background. A few portraits, however, are painted against a flat background of very dark green and occasionally black, evidently the work of an artist of some originality. No light and shade, or cast shadows, as ordinarily understood, are observable, only a delicate toning and modelling are introduced to bring out the relief. The picture relies on its rich colouring, sympathetic outline drawing, and decorative treatment for its artistic effect.

Such was the general scheme in which these portraits were conceived, but it is in the delineation of the actual features that the genius of the Mughal portrait painter is seen at its best. Technically the actual painting of the face and head is a marvel of fineness and finish, but the amount of character that the artist has put into the likeness of his subject is only excelled in the medals of Pisanello. The mental 'stock-in-trade' of an experienced portrait painter contains much knowledge of human nature as reflected in the visage of the sitter, and the Mughal artist had this knowledge at his finger tips. Stiff and formal though his portraits at first sight may seem to be, the delicate drawing and subtle modelling of the

likeness is there in its perfection, and by means of these qualities we realise the character and soul of the original—actually look into the heart of the man himself. Contemporary historians may have described this distinguished individual according to his own dictation—fulsome and flattering—but the artist has sub-consciously presented him as his deeds had marked him, great or petty, kind or cruel, generous or miserly, true or false, strong or vacillating—these qualities reveal themselves, touch by touch, through the fine brush, dexterous hand and observant eye of this brilliant character delineator.

The majority of the portraits of the Mughal school represent the figure in almost complete profile. The earlier Indo-Persian portrait showed more freedom in this respect, the face in these examples being not unfrequently a three-quarter view. After this it seems a retrograde step to find the subsequent Mughal artists adhering to the rigid profile system ordinarily associated with the figure drawing of a more primitive type. As a picture the Mughal portrait is pre-eminently a conventional production, controlled by certain laws, bound by traditions, and ruled by the changing fashions of the court. In the hands of any but an experienced artist, a portrait produced on these exacting terms would tend to be a stiff and lifeless work, lacking in interest and conviction. As would be expected, the result, at its best, is conventional and decorative, but it is considerably more than this. For by his inherent skill the painter has not only redeemed it from what might have been a rudimentary commonplace, but has produced a work of art of great character. A good Mughal portrait undoubtedly possesses a charm and quality which is peculiarly its own.

The fact that the likeness presented by the Mughal painter

is a true portrait has already been emphasised, but apart from this essential consideration the actual technique in the surface treatment, the shading and colouring of the features is of unquestionable merit. Then above all is the exceptionally fine drawing, which, in some examples, may be studied under unusual conditions. For it is not uncommon to find specimens of this school, consisting of very carefully executed impressions in black and white of the head alone—the reminder of the picture being merely faintly outlined on the paper. Some of these are preliminary sketches, while others are drawings left unfinished and before the actual pigments have been applied. But in both cases they serve the useful purpose of enabling the student to observe the skilfulness of the painter at a particularly interesting stage of his work. In these marvellously fine 'thumb-nail' sketches it is possible to study the accuracy of the drawing, the breadth, and, at the same time, the minuteness of the modelling, and the high quality of the artist's handiwork generally. Any of these drawings may be enlarged to several times the actual size of the original, yet they continue to retain all the virtues which are the charm of the miniature.

In the finished picture the plumed and jewelled headdress, and the pearls and precious stones around the neck, acted as a foil to the delicate painting of the face, while, in the case of royalty, the golden halo, surrounding the whole, adds a dignity and emphasis which is unmistakable. The background to the figure may be a plain golden-green wash, blending into blue or melting into a copper-coloured sky at the upper border, and the individual usually stands stiffly posed on a little garden plot, occupying the lower limit of the picture. A few flowers growing about the feet are intended to break the formality of this composition, but the

simplicity of the background contrasting with the richness of the costume and figure is evidently the artist's main idea.

The somewhat severe arrangement of the Mughal portrait is, however, relieved by one important feature, namely, the natural treatment of the hands. Reference has been already made to the expressive manner in which these are depicted in the Buddhist frescoes. This tradition is maintained in the subsequent art of the Mughals, and the hands are always well posed and conscientiously drawn. It is doubtful whether the portrait painter of any other age has realised, as fully as the Indian artist, the importance of this aspect of his subject. The painter, be he Buddhist, Rajput or Mughal, saw at once the significance of the position of the hands, as well as the great character that lies in the fingers, and used this knowledge with notable effect in his artistic productions. It is not an exaggeration to say that the final test of a good Mughal miniature may be applied to the hands. A favourite method of the artist was to lay these naturally over each other on the sword-hilt, a dignified action, eminently suitable to the subject. But if special attention to the hand was considered desirable, the apparently affected pose of holding a flower or jewel was employed. To the modernist this is not exactly natural or manly, but the Mughals were fond of gardens and flowers, as well as personal ornaments, and it was a means of showing the character of the hand in probably quite the usual manner of the time.

The larger portion of the miniatures of the Mughal period, which have been handed down to us, have as their subject a representation of some individual who had an actual existence before or during this great dynasty. Kings and jesters, queens and dancing girls, princes and ascetics, saints and soldiers, courtiers and grooms, authentically named likenesses

of all sorts and conditions of people are depicted, and collectively form a national portrait gallery of which few countries can boast. The old Indian historian has been frequently criticised for the scantiness of his character studies, but the artist has made ample amends for these literary shortcomings, and has produced in a most lively manner the figures and features of the people of his time. But this versatile painter has done even more than this. Long years before there lived and died men whose names for some distinguished work or action had become household words in different parts of Asia. Some of these existed in those mythological ages which form the foundation of the history of India and Persia, and had carved out by the power of the sword the countries which they subsequently ruled and made famous. By the skill of the Mughal artist a succeeding generation was not only able to cherish the memory of its departed hero, but it was possible for the people to preserve in their homes a traditional portrait of this historical person. For, taken probably in the first instance from a contemporary original, this was copied and re-copied right through the centuries, still recording in its expression or drawing those characteristic features by which it could be immediately recognised by all men. Iredj, a prince of Persia in that country's legendary period ; Chenghiz Khan, Emperor of the Mongols ; Imam Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, are examples, taken at random, of pictures which could be obtained until quite recent times. Only a few years ago it was possible to secure in the Punjab a portrait of Alexander the Great, with typical Grecian helmet, who, it may be recalled, spent only eighteen months in India, and that considerably over two thousand years ago. 'Many of the portraits are traditional. The features of distinguished personages are repeated so often that the artists

are able at will to draw Aurangzeb, Akbar, or Dost Muhammed. They have thus reduced their portrait-gallery to a series of conventional types, which, however, are at once properly recognised' (J. Lockwood Kipling).

This, however, largely applies to a later development of Mughal portraiture, when, instead of a superior art remarkable for its originality, it had begun to degenerate into a system of stereotyped copying.

For the first half of the Mughal dynasty the art was an aristocratic one, produced to the order of the ruling princes and the nobles around the court. Gradually it began to appeal to the people, and a demand for a cheap and popular form of portraiture arose. This appears to have been its death-knell, for with the advent of the eighteenth century the production of copies of notable personages had become a trade which speedily took the place of the old art. This trade was conducted by a system of reproducing from a paper stencil. In the case of historical notabilities there usually existed one or more accepted types of this individual's portrait. No doubt these 'type-pictures' were, in some instances, original paintings made by one of the leading artists of the time from the living person. But in the very ancient or semi-mythical portraits these had been obtained from previous copies, and these again from still earlier ones, until it is evident that the presumed 'type' can only be a tradition. When, however, the individual depicted had lived in a less remote age, the type was a portrait painted directly from the sitter, interpreted, of course, according to the artist's ideas, but at the same time an extremely clever conventional representation of the man and his most striking characteristics. From this type-portrait careful tracings were made on a special kind of transparent skin—the prototype of the tracing-

paper of a later day. These tracings were executed in a brush outline, with the names of the different local colours in the original written neatly in their proper places. Each of these 'stencils' thus formed a very serviceable 'working-drawing,' from which the artist could make any number of duplicates. Large numbers of these prepared stencils formed an important part of the stock-in-trade of the Indian portrait painter, and they are often seen among collections of Mughal pictures. The outlines of many of these have been much damaged owing to perforations, as it was customary to 'pounce' from them in the process of duplication. But even with this disfigurement they show clear evidences of having been very carefully drawn. In some cases these tracings have survived without the perforations, and the fineness and freedom of the outline is remarkable. It may be observed that the wood-block, as a cheap but artistic form of reproduction, appears to have been unknown in India, although at this period wood engraving was a common art in Japan, so that the Mughal artist was forced to meet a demand for popular 'prints' by this system of stencils coloured by hand.

Not infrequently the Mughal portrait bears, either on the picture itself or on the border, the name of the person represented, written in Indian ink in Arabic characters. In the case of a group of figures it was not unusual to write the name of each individual in minute letters on the actual field of the picture, and near to the person indicated. Sometimes the names are to be found written on the reverse side of the picture, but the veracity of these inscriptions is not reliable. In this connection it is strange to record the number of mistakes that occur in these inscriptions, for instance, Jehangir will be written instead of Aurangzeb, although the error is obvious to anyone with the slightest knowledge of the features of

these two monarchs. The most likely reason for this is that the name has been subsequently written by some person entirely unacquainted with the appearance of either. This refers to those names that are wrongly written through ignorance, but there are other cases, where a forged name has been recently added in order to give the portrait a greater interest and value. Sometimes these are written on the front of the picture, and are very cleverly thought out and inscribed, so much so that it is almost impossible to distinguish whether they are genuine or not. Not unfrequently these forged names are recorded on the back of the mount, when again it is difficult to judge definitely of their authenticity. It may be that the picture has been remounted, in which case the craftsman entrusted with this duty has transferred the name on the old back to the new one, a very necessary proceeding if the record of the picture is to be preserved. But all these inscriptions should be accepted with great caution, and only after a very careful examination of the penmanship and any other details that may appear unusual.

X

RAJPUT PAINTING

THE examples of Rajput painting that have been handed down to us are practically all contemporary with the painting of the Mughal school. At the same time Rajput art fundamentally is the old indigenous art of India, representing a continuation of the classic painting of the Buddhist frescoes. For reasons already given, very few specimens of this painting earlier than the Mughal period have been preserved to the present day. In these circumstances we are compelled, therefore, to review this art of ancient lineage in the light of comparatively recent examples—productions of painters who worked in Hindustan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the present era. As the two arts, Mughal and Rajput, were carried on side by side, a brief reference to the two styles of work becomes necessary. When the existence of painting in India was recently realised, the whole of the paintings of Northern India were classed as of one style—the Mughal. Gradually, as these began to be studied, a difference in the intention of these productions became manifest, and eventually the existence of the two parallel schools of painting was established. Broadly the Mughal art may be defined as aristocratic and genuinely realistic, while the Rajput painting, although similar in all its technical aspects, is democratic and, in the main, mystic. The latter art reveals all the religious favour of the Ajanta frescoes, but, in place of the passiveness of the Buddhist

religion, it is founded on the restless energy of the Hindu pantheon. This is its fundamental idea, but it also embraces every aspect of Indian national life, and delves deeply into the fascinating folklore of the country. From this it will be seen that Rajput painting is largely a folk art, produced naturally by the people for their own pleasure and edification. It is a reflection of the simple life of the Indian villager, his work and play, his religious ceremonies, his home life, and above all it mirrors the picturesque atmosphere of his creed. His art, therefore, resolves itself into two broad divisions, on the one hand representations of the everyday life of the ordinary Indian, and on the other pictures of that mythological and religious world which was the delight of his fancy and at the same time the bedrock of his existence.

The former of these divisions may be considered first. No scene of everyday life appears to have been too commonplace for the brush of the Rajput artist. His productions are often not finished pictures, but clever outline sketches of familiar scenes of the bazaar, rapid impressions faithfully rendered, of the occupations of his fellow-craftsmen. Among his pictures one may see the carpet weaver, as he bends over his loom tying the intricate knots of coloured wool, which make up the pattern of the fabric. Around him are gathered all the implements of his craft, while added to these are his shoes, cast aside, so that he may manipulate with his toes the guide-string of the warp. Needless to say, these appliances of the loom are technically correct, for the trade was probably carried on day after day under the very eyes of the artist, as he sketched the things he saw before him from the front of his little house in the bazaar. The cotton printer, the embroiderer, the goldsmith, are all to be found depicted by his facile brush, and the small subsidiary incidents which he



SCENE BY THE ROADSIDE, KANGRA *KALM* (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 16



'AROUND THE CAMP FIRE,' KANGRA *KALM*

introduces into his sketches, show the observant nature and homely feeling of the artist. We may remark in one of these pictures the son of the workman having his prentice hand trained in the ancestral trade, a younger brother standing by in admiration of his elder's growing skill. In the background are two women, one of whom is lovingly dandling a fine baby, whose joyous crowings can be almost heard, as he endeavours to grasp his mother's large silver ear-ring. The other woman holds an older child by the hand, but, woman-like, is fondly sharing in the maternal pride of the one with the babe in her arms.

Another form of genre in which the Rajput painter excelled was the representation of ordinary incidents of the road. Before the present mechanical method of locomotion had been thought of, travelling in India was a very picturesque and leisurely affair. It is, however, so frequently portrayed in all its various aspects, both grave and gay, by the medieval artists of India, as to suggest that the population of the country was as fond of journeying by road in the past as it is by railway in the present. The mid-day rest, the camp fire by night, or the lengthy sojourn in the serai, were all made the subjects of pictures, and represented with a naïve sincerity, which adds not a little to their general charm. Plate 15 depicts what appears to be a mid-day halt by the roadside. A well under the cool shade of a banyan tree is the attraction, and the travellers are seen grouped around this welcome feature. The tired cooly in the foreground has dropped his load and is stretched in a careless attitude on his opened bedding, a fellow-labourer in the distance is also resting his weary frame. An armed attendant is gratefully receiving a draught of water from a woman at the well, while below a menial servant is preparing a *hukkā* for the refresh-

ment of his lord and master. This important individual is indolently reclining near at hand, and performing his toilet with the aid of a small hand-mirror. Two women are seated near, one of whom is fanning him and massaging his feet. This rustic scene by its unaffected and natural character gives the greatest of pleasure, and the small unrehearsed and accidental incidents which gradually reveal themselves in this composition are very interesting. This example is of the Kangra *kalm,* an offshoot of the Rajput school, and is typical of the work of that style.

A not uncommon subject of the Rajput painter was a composition, which depended for its effect on the use of double lighting, such as a landscape illuminated by a combination of moonlight and firelight. Groups of figures under trees or near a hut, lit by the flickering flame of a log fire, with a distant landscape in darkness save for the glamour of the crescent moon, were favourite motifs of this poetical painter—

'Let me fetch a burning faggot and prepare a friendly light,
With these fallen withered branches chase the shadows of the night.'

Book V, *Pativrata Mahatmya, Mahābhārata.*

And the artist obtained these difficult effects in the most convincing way, the blending of the two lights, the overlapping of the shadows and the mystery of the whole being very skilfully portrayed. In working out these schemes it was not unusual for the Rajput painter, before he commenced his picture, to 'prime' his paper with a coating of gold. Over this he laid his other pigments, and so secured a brilliancy in the lights and a luminous quality in the shadows which has rarely been equalled by any other artist in this medium.

Japanese artists have tried the same method, realising the value of gold as an underglaze in certain effects of an impressionist order, but the Rajput artists employed this process in their most finished productions. A silver priming was also used as a variation to this, especially in connection with the representation of still water over which lotus flowers and other aquatic plants were painted, but the result was hardly so successful as the gold.

As a direct descendant of the Buddhist school, it is only natural that Rajput painting should be an art of line. 'This vigorous archaic outline is the basis of its language. Wiry, distinct and sharp as that golden rule of art and life desired by Blake: sensitive, reticent, and tender, it perfectly reflects the severe self-control and sweet serenity of Indian life' (Coomaraswamy). At first sight the similarity between the Ajanta frescoes and the Rajput pictures may seem remote ; the large-sized mural frescoes of the one appear to be on a different plane from the miniature productions of the other. But the latter, if carefully examined will be found to be but reduced examples of the older school, betraying the same general characteristics in many respects, and inspired and guided by the same fundamental principles in their religion and their art. A few specimens of Rajput work, which have survived, have even been executed on the same scale and in the same method as the Ajanta cave paintings—large frescoes adorning the walls of palaces in Upper India, and the stencils of these are still in existence. The bold, strong outline is similar in both styles, and the general treatment displays several qualities common to the two schools. The differences between these two forms of expression are more apparent than real, the Buddhist artist by circumstance having the great stretch of levelled rock for his field, and

the crowd of devotees, who thronged the pillared hall, were the public to whom his art appealed. Then the Buddhist monastery with its ample chaitya halls passed away, and in its place arose the Hindu shrine, comprising a receptacle for the deity, but room for little more. For the Rajput painter, therefore, no expanse of wall surface presented itself, the architecture of his time did not allow of large plain spaces for the reception of his handiwork. A different creed prevailed, and with it certain external changes had taken place in the trend of national life. There was no really deep-seated alteration: the under-current remained practically the same, but the outward manifestations and ritual had become modified with the rise of the reformed Hinduism of medieval times. And so we find the national art modified to conform to the new conditions that were established in India after the Buddhist decline. These new conditions were bound up in the *Purāṇas,* and the legends of the divinities of the later Hindu pantheon, in which Parvati and Shiva take the most popular place. With these as the central features of the religion, it naturally follows that they became the dominant figures in art, an art which, in painting, took the form of small folio pictures, easily preserved and readily handled.

Further, much of the Rajput painting may be described as epical, taking as its themes incidents from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* those two classical poems which through all the ages have been to Indian life what the warp is to the woof, the basis of the people's spiritual fabric. Thus many of the pictures of this school are collections of illustrations depicting all the dramatic incidents of these epics, whole series of paintings, in connected sequence, recording the doings of the ancient deities, kings, and heroes, who were the principal characters in these poetical narratives.

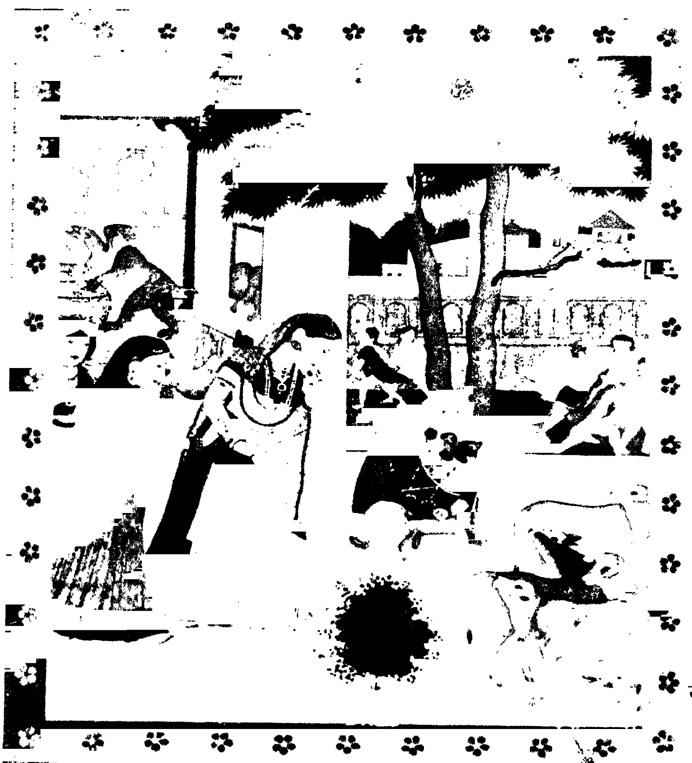
On the reverse side of the paintings is usually written the title and description of the subject, a contrast to the Mughal miniatures where, although a long inscription on the reverse is sometimes artistically illuminated, this rarely has the remotest connection with the picture. The reason for this anomaly is that the Mughal picture is often the production of two separate artists, the painter and the calligraphist. To these may be added a third craftsman, the mounter, who takes the works of the two former and combines them in one composite work of art, the painting on one side, the beautiful writing on the other. To not a few of the connoisseurs of the time the latter was considered the premier art.

A large proportion of the pictures illustrating the religious beliefs of this period were mainly Vaishnavite in purport, and specially dealt with Krishna-cult, this being the more popular creed. Vishnu's incarnation as Krishna provided a personal god, which to the ordinary Hindu mind was nearer and clearer than the vague manifestations of the Supreme Power, although the presence of a spiritual being underlies every form of Hinduism. And as the Buddha was the central figure of the Buddhist creed, and the stories of his birth and life and death were for centuries the subject of the Buddhist artist's brush, so in the course of time arose Krishna, the hero of innumerable tales and legends, to stir the hearts of the people and afford a fund of picturesque material for the miniatures of the Rajput painter.

Krishna, therefore, in all his varied characters, in every act and deed, is the central figure in much of the Rajput art, and some of the best work of the school gathers around the story of this versatile deity. His humaneness specially appealed to the ordinary mind of the common people; he shared in their joys and sorrows, their work and play, their

village and field life, and, in his love for animals, especially for the cow ; he struck a note which drew at once the sympathy of the agriculturist, a community comprising the greater portion of the Indian people. In Rajput pictures the treatment of animal life is in great contrast with the contemporary Mughal school. Where the latter, almost without exception, deals with the materialistic aspect of the subject, the hunting of wild beasts, the fighting of rams, deer, or elephants, the Rajput painter dignifies these creatures by giving them the outward forms of his deities, and they thus become his animal friends, his dumb helpers in times of trouble. And no other Indian artist could draw these with the feeling that the Rajput painter gave them ; he realised the almost human qualities that certain animals possessed, and, working on these, produced composite beings raised considerably above the ordinary conception of the beast of the field or forest. What could be finer than his representation of Hanuman, the monkey-god, and his faithful followers, the sense of devotion that characterises this simian tribe, humbly aspiring by virtue of its good deeds to the higher plane? The ludicrous ape is ignored, and we are presented with man's presumed prototype, elevated into his colleague, engaged in the noble act of overthrowing the wrong-doer and establishing righteousness. But the outward form is there, the Hanuman of the Rajput picture is no pantomine creature, his limbs and shape are conventionally correct, but clothed, crowned and exalted into a sacred thing.

And in the same manner is the Rajput painter's treatment of cattle, the favourite adjuncts of Krishna. When the artist represented realistic scenes of rural life, his animal drawing indicated a knowledge of nature surpassed only by the Japanese. Occasionally these realistic sketches found their



INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF KRISHNA, KANGRA *KALM* (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 18



DANCE OF SHIVA (*SANDHYĀ GĀYATRI*), KANGRA *KALM*

play untouched into the backgrounds of religious compositions, but as a rule his pictures of divine subjects are produced with a sense of reverence which dominates the entire scheme. The group of cows, beautifully drawn, the leaders richly caparisoned, passes slowly along ; this movement, so characteristic of 'the lowing herd,' is faithfully rendered, breathing gentleness and peace as it progresses across the picture.

The other field of Rajput art is in the realms of Shivaism, and we are presented with many pictures dedicated to this aspect of Hinduism. A typical example is Plate 18, the subject of which is the 'Dance of Shiva' (*Sandhyā Gāyatrī*). In the centre is Shiva, the leopard skin with which the god is clothed swirling around him with the vigour of his action. On a lotus throne sits the Sakti, gazing at the beauty of her own form in the mirror held before her by attendants. In the foreground is a group of musicians, playing on a variety of instruments, some of these of a very interesting type. The left of the picture is occupied by a divine chorus, all the deities in different ways doing homage to their lord. In the distance is a conventional landscape of snow-clad peaks, crowned with rolling clouds in which are angels distributing offerings of flowers. This picture is of the Kangra *kalm*, and painted about the end of the eighteenth century, or somewhat later. It has been a brilliant scheme of colour, but is now faded and much of its original effect has disappeared. But traces of its beauty still remain, including the colours of some of the costumes, the blue of the distant foothills and the rich golden glow of the whole.

Unlike the Mughal, the Rajput artist was not by inclination a portrait painter, but probably owing to the fashion set by the Mughal emperors, he was responsible for a consi-

derable number of likenesses of a very interesting type. There are two distinct styles of Rajput portraits—those of the Kangra *kalm* and those of the Jeypore *kalm*. Of the former *kalm* Plate 19 is a characteristic example, while Plate 20 illustrates the latter style of work. Neither has the rich glowing effect or vigorous spirit of the Mughal portrait, but they have much to commend them on account of their consummate sincerity.

The Jeypore portraits are severely conventional in their intention, usually rigidly in profile, and the colour is simple almost to timidity. Most of these portraits are in outline, as if unfinished. It is difficult to explain the large proportion of incompleted work in this *kalm*. Again the most noticeable feature of these sketches is the outline, sharp and clear, fine as a hair, but palpitating with feeling and sensitiveness. It is not uncommon to find pictures of this *kalm* exhibiting every quality of a 'silver point,' so delicate and refined is the drawing. In these examples the subject was first sketched in black outline on the paper, and over this was painted a fairly thick priming of white. Through this semi-opaque glaze the original scheme could be faintly seen and the design was then re-drawn over the first lines in a delicate gray line by means of a very fine brush. Any colour that was considered necessary to finish off this drawing was washed on in a few light tints, although the effect aimed at by the artist was not one of colour, but a grisaille on an ivory ground.

The Kangra portraits are of a different character, brighter in colour, showing a certain feeling for modelling and light and shade, softer in treatment, but nevertheless observing the same underlying principles as the Jeypore work. Apart from representations of local rajas and the lesser nobility of

PLATE 19



PORTRAIT GROUP, KANGRA *KALM*
(EIGHTEENTH CENTURY).

PLATE 2c



RAJPUT PRINCE HUNTING, JEYPORE *KILIM*
(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

the time, posing at richly-adorned windows or reclining on gaily-tinted mats, often smoking a *hukkā,* there was another more religious aspect of this portraiture. The saint, or *sadu,* was not infrequently a subject for the Kangra *kalm,* seated beneath a tree or beside a shrine, silent and alone, or perhaps talking to some devout listener who is reverently drinking in his words. Pictures of the emperors and princes of the Mughal line were also the work of the Kangra artists' adaptable nature, probably to supply a popular local demand for likenesses of those royal personages.

Miniature paintings illustrating the group of Indian musical compositions, known as the *Rāg-Mālā,* were often produced by the Pahari artist, and this combination of the two arts of painting and music is of special interest on account of the wide field which a study of this 'visualised music' opens up. It emphasises, among other things, the peculiar position that the arts generally occupied in the culture of the people, and the close relation that existed between the different forms of artistic expression. The *Rāg-Mālā* is a collection of forty-two allied melodies, known and at once recognised by all educated Hindus. Each of these melodies is understood to be a musical description of a certain pictorial composition, or, as the idea is reversible, each music-picture is a coloured interpretation of the particular melody with which it is associated. In other words, the musician plays from a picture, and the artist paints from a tune. And the Rajput artists, especially the Pahari painters, made great use of this art, a large number of paintings in this style being illustrations of the various melodies comprising the *Rāg-Mālā*.

In other directions, too, the Rajput painters worked in conjunction with the sister arts, such as poetry and the

drama, and many of the pictures of this school depict subjects taken from the Indian classical writings. Figures of ideal types, as, for instance, the *Nāyakas* or hero-lovers, were designed by the Pahari artist of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and denote that this art had its romantic aspect. In the majority of the examples, however, the 'Lover and the Beloved' take the form of Krishna and Radha respectively, romance, passion and religion being symbolised in the person of these popular divinities.

XI

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE

ALTHOUGH records are naturally scanty regarding the technical details of Indian painting in the Early Period, there is a certain amount of material from which some idea may be gained of the process by which the primitive artists obtained their results. As in all countries, the first 'brush-forms' made by the hand of man were executed in hæmatite, a pigment obtained from red oxide of iron. The shaded portions were produced by the application of a darkened mixture of the same paint. What brushes were used by the prehistoric artists of India is not known, as none of these have survived, but the fairly delicate details in some of the drawings denote a comparatively fine implement. It has been suggested that the hæmatite was probably mixed with animal fat and laid on with a fibrous brush, while the outlines were executed with a pointed stick (Cockburn, *J.A.S.B.*, 1883). Prehistoric palettes are plentiful, smooth slabs of stone on which the colours were ground and prepared for use. The number of these that have been found on neolithic sites indicates that primitive painting was a comparatively common art. It is clear that brushforms of a pictorial character were the principal means of communication in the days before any script was known.

At a much later date, in the Jogimara cave at Ramgarh, the artist's palette consists of three distinct pigments—red, white and black. The red colour is hæmatite, the white is obtained from an earth which is common in the locality,

while the black is evidently an extract of myrobalans (*terminalia chebula*). This dried fruit has been used as a dye in India from the earliest times, and, in combination with a salt of iron, produces an excellent black.

As regards brushes, there is the following reference in the *Upanishads*, a treatise the greater portion of which dates from a very distant period:

> 'Let a man with firmness separate the spirit,
> the inner soul, from his own body, as from a
> painter's brush a fibre.'—*6th Valli, 17.*

This expression, which is a curiously technical one, may indicate that the early painters did not employ hair for the manufacture of their brushes, but might have made them of fine vegetable fibre.

The surface of the walls in the Jogimara cave shows few signs of being specially prepared for the purpose, much of the painting being executed directly on to the roughly-chiselled rock. Some portions, however, had been 'primed' with a layer of plaster about the thickness of an eggshell, but this made little improvement to the general surface, owing to the uneven dressing of the walls.

The process of the Buddhist frescoes appears to have been the same in all the examples that have survived. Over the surface of the rough excavated wall of rock a mixture of clay, cow-dung, and pulverised trap rock was applied, to the thickness of one-eighth to three-quarters of an inch. Sometimes this first dressing also contained finely-chopped straw or rice husks. This ground was then coated with an exceedingly thin layer of white plaster, about the thickness of, and in some senses resembling, an eggshell. On this polished shell-like-surface the frescoes were painted in water-colour.

As to the actual process employed in the application of the pigment there is a considerable difference of opinion. It was either true fresco (the *fresco buono* of the Italian artists), or a combination of this method and tempera painting (*fresco a secco*). Efforts have also been made to prove that the process was, almost entirely, that of tempera. *Fresco buono,* as an art, was practised in Europe before the Christian era, Vitruvius and Pliny both making fairly detailed references to it. It consists of preparing a plaster ground, and, while this is still damp, applying the colour in broad effects. The process is necessarily a rapid one, as the painting must be completed before the plaster has time to dry. Only a certain portion of the work in hand can be undertaken at a time, and only that amount of plaster surface, as can be covered by the artist in the time at his disposal, need be prepared. That which is unpainted at the end of the day is cut away up to the painted part, and relaid the following day or the next occasion on which the artist is ready to continue his painting. It is often possible in the historic frescoes of Europe to distinguish where the joining-up process took place, although it is true that the older plasterers were sufficiently expert to make the joints in the surface so well as to be invisible after hundreds of years. It may be remarked that no system of joining or 'piece-surface' is observable in the old Buddhist paintings of India. Further, to hold the moisture properly for the purpose of applying the pigments, the layer of plaster should be at least a quarter of an inch thick. This *intonaco,* or final coat, in the Sigiriya paintings is a quarter to half an inch thick ; at Ajanta it is as thin as an eggshell. One of the earliest paintings, in Cave 9, was executed on a plaster ground one thirty-second of an inch thick, applied directly on the rock and polished like porcelain. In hot

climates this *intonaco* should ordinarily be thicker in order to allow for evaporation due to the abnormal drying character of the atmosphere. In the case of the quasi-frescoes of the Etrurians, which date before the Christian era, the dampness of the rock was enough to keep the stucco skin moist, and so allow the necessary infiltration of colour from the surface. The coating of plaster on which the Egyptian and Mesopotamian paintings were executed was too thin to have lent itself to true fresco treatment. The method employed by the artists of these two countries was that of tempera, the same process which, it is suggested, was utilised by the Buddhist painters of India. Tempera, or *fresco secco,* is a method of lime painting on a plaster surface that has been allowed to dry. This dry surface of plaster is thoroughly drenched the night before with water, to which a little lime or baryta water has been added, and the wetting is renewed the next morning. On the dampened surface thus obtained the artist makes his painting with the same pigments as used in *fresco buono,* but mixed with lime or baryta water, or with a little slaked lime. Compared with true fresco, tempera is heavy and opaque in its results, while, although of great durability, as is exemplified by the ancient Egyptian wall paintings, it has not the chemical permanence of the *fresco buono*. The pigment of the *buono* sinks into, and becomes incorporated with, the plaster, and thus forms actually part of the ground composition, while the *secco* can never be anything but a layer of pigment lying on the top of the prepared surface of the wall. There is certainly considerable evidence to show that the early Buddhist mural paintings were not, as a whole, true fresco, as this process is ordinarily understood, but it is quite possible that it was a modification of this method, devised and put into practice by the artists

of the period. On the other hand, the opacity of the colours in some respects, as well as their impermanence in others, besides the composition of the prepared ground, tends to support the theory that the so-called frescoes are, after all, mural paintings executed in tempera.

The ground of these ancient paintings having been prepared, the artist then proceeded to sketch out his composition in a bold red line-drawing on the white plaster. Although this first sketch was evidently drawn in by an experienced hand, it was subsequently corrected in many places with a strong black or brown line when the final drawing was added. The system is so similar in this particular respect to the process employed by the early Egyptians that it may be considered identical ; in this case also the first red outlines were drawn or traced by the painter, and afterwards checked by the master-artist with a vigorous black line. After the Buddhist painter had drawn out his scheme in red, he proceeded to apply over this a thinnish semi-transparent terra-verte monochrome, through which his original outline could be seen. This system of underglazing is very similar to that practised by the Italians in their early fresco work. Over this preliminary glaze the Indian artist worked in his local colour—reds, yellows, browns, and blacks, 'suggestively laid in with solid brush strokes—the flesh not unlike some examples of modern French painting.' Afterwards came 'a strengthening of the outlines with blacks and browns, giving great decision, but also a certain flatness ; last, a little shading if necessary. There is not very much definite light and shade modelling, but there is great definition, given by the use of contrasting local colour and of emphatic blacks and whites' (Herringham).

We have no knowledge of the kind of brush that the

Buddhist painter used, but the composition of some of his pigments has been ascertained. The true fresco painter is limited in his palette, as the pigments have to be capable of resisting the decomposing action of lime, and must consequently be extracted from natural earths. But it is possible that the Indian artist, like the Egyptian, was allowed a wider range of colours on account of his particular process appertaining more to the tempera method than that of fresco. He was, therefore, able to use purples, pinks, and greens, which would have been destroyed by fresh lime. The various shades of red at Ajanta and Bagh are ferruginous in origin, while the green pigment seems to be entirely composed of a finely-powdered silicate containing iron. The white is largely sulphate of lime, no zinc, baryta, or lead being detectable. The blue has all the appearance of ultramarine, and the yellow is believed to be orpiment, a natural arsenic sulphide.

From the period of the Buddhist cave paintings to the comparatively modern Rajput pictures of the eighteenth century is a long interval, nevertheless these two schools of painting are closely connected by their technique. In other respects, too, the relationship between the two arts is undoubtedly discernible, but in the matter of process and execution the two styles are nearly identical. Although the Rajput pictures are almost entirely miniatures, it is apparent that they represent, fundamentally, mural paintings adapted to the smaller form of art. As in the Buddhist paintings, the composition was first sketched out in a red outline, only in this case on a prepared sheet of paper instead of the plastered wall. Over this was laid a white priming, semi-transparent, through which the red line could be more or less distinctly seen. The outline was then re-drawn in black, often freely modifying the original red sketch. The local

colour is next applied as a glaze over the priming, and the details are then painted in. It is not unusual to see, in incompleted pictures, the background entirely finished while the central figures are untouched. This is due to the fact of the painting being the work of two artists, an assistant having been employed on the accessories, and the figure reserved for the more skilful hand of the master-craftsman. In some cases the white priming is omitted, the painting being executed directly on to the surface of the paper ; corrections are then made by means of white colour, and the same pigment is likewise the basis of other essential features of the colour scheme.

The Mughal miniatures, more than any other art, illustrate the amount of care that the Oriental artist expended in the preparation of his materials. It is hardly necessary to add that most of these materials were the productions of his own hands, or manufactured under his direct supervision. This particularly applies to the paper, which he selected and adapted to his purpose with considerable knowledge and skill. During the Mughal period, India had a reputation for several kinds of paper, which were much sought after by artists and calligraphers. The principal qualities were *hariri* (sometimes alluded to as *reshmi*), a silk paper, but having the defect of cracking in the course of time, and *Daulatābādi,* the production of the town of Daulatabad, in the dominions of the Nizam. The ordinary paper of the country was also widely used, under the name of *Hindi.* Later *Sialkoti* paper had a great vogue, being made at Sialkot, in the Punjab. In the South of India a paper called *Mughali* was preferred, which indicates an association with the Northern school, while another favourite paper made in Mysore was referred to as *kardey.* These papers were prepared from three pro-

ducts (a) bamboo, and called *bavsaha* or *bhansi* paper, (b) *tat*, or jute, and known as *tataha*, and (c) *tula*, or cotton, which went by the name of *tulat* paper. Added to these was a quality referred to as *sunni* which was prepared from flax. Two foreign kinds of paper were sometimes used by Indian painters, being known as *Irani* and *Ispāhāni*, which denote that the Persian article was preferred by some. None of these papers were white, most of them being of a light buff tint. Having selected one of these that suited his purpose, the artist proceeded to paste two or more sheets together to provide a substantial ground for his work. In book illustration only one thickness was used. The surface on which his painting was to appear first received his attention. This he carefully burnished with a piece of rounded agate, until it assumed an enamel-like smoothness. The painter then began to paint his picture on this prepared surface, and carried this out in the manner of the Rajput paintings already described. The first outline was always made with Indian red (*gairika*), which, being unmixed with any adherent, was easily removed. Lampblack was the pigment used in finishing the outline drawings, and was made by burning camphor-wick in a mustard-oil lamp. The colours were often prepared by the hands of the painter himself, according to his own special formulæ. They were extracts of various plants and minerals—madder was made from shellac, burnt sienna from *henna* leaves, yellow was *Multani mutti*, or earth of Multan, etc.—but a list of these will be found at the end of this chapter. These pigments were most judiciously selected, besides being carefully ground and mixed, and the test of time has proved their remarkable permanence.

One aspect of the Mughal school of painting was the

system of employing the artist to make several copies of his compositions, these being prepared evidently at the order of different patrons, and all executed from some standard original. Several reproductions of the same picture are, therefore, not unusual, often by the same hand, but sometimes the work of an inferior craftsman. To meet this demand an artist was accustomed to keep by him certain working drawings as a kind of stock-in-trade. These working drawings were generally in the form of tracings, which, while giving the complete outline, were also amplified by the local colour being indicated with touches of the pigment in the places where this was to be applied. In some cases the name of each colour was microscopically written on the tracing instead of the small colour note. From this it may be realised that a proper method of tracing any drawing was an important part of the artist's training. Collections of these tracings are very common, and were kept in considerable quantities by the artists, being bequeathed from father to son as valuable trade heirlooms. The tracing paper, called *charba,* was prepared from deer skin. The transfer was obtained by pricking the outline and then 'pouncing' with powdered charcoal.

The traditional spacing, or 'lay-out,' of a Mughal or Rajput picture may be considered here. In the first place, the panel forming the central portion of the scheme was the picture proper, and was the work of the superior artist. The mounting and border were the work of another individual, who carried on this particular handicraft as a separate art. This panel, or *taswir* is frequently placed slightly out of the centre of the whole conception, generally to one side, a little touch of informality that gives the picture a special charm. The border itself, which is ultimately added to the *taswir,* is

called *hāshiā*. Where the *taswir* joins on to the *hāshiā*, a narrow decorated band and two lines of colour are usually placed, the former is known as *phulkari* or *bale*, while the two latter are termed *jadval* or *khat*. *Phulkari* implies that this band is decorated with isolated flowers only, but *bale* indicates that a running pattern is introduced. The main breadth of the *hāshiā* is ordinarily ornamented with a spotted gold effect, the gold when applied in regular patches being referred to as *tikki*, from *tika*, the caste mark applied to the foreheads of all Hindus. A smaller sprinkled gold pattern is known as *shafak*, while a finely-powdered gold effect is the *gubara*, both being common methods of illuminating the borders of Mughal pictures. The speckled gold effect is obtained in two ways, either by sprinkling on the gold paint while wet from the bristles of a stiff brush, or powdering it on from a pouncing bag, the ground having been previously prepared with a thin wash of rice water. When the *hāshiā* is closely covered with sprays of flowers, as is the richest form of bordering, the artist gives it the name of *jhar*.

Brushes (*kalm*) were made from the hair of various animals, such as the goat, camel, squirrel, and mongoose. Very fine brushes were much in vogue, as the minute character of the painting plainly shows, some of the finest being prepared from the downy hairs on the tails of young squirrels. In Ceylon the finest work was executed with brushes made of the awns of the *teli tana* grass (*aristida adscensionis*), which are specially suited for this purpose. These may be the fibre referred to in the prehistoric work.

Some of the details of the processes employed by the Mughal artists are of considerable interest. One style of painting, known as *jarah*, consisted in encrusting parts of

the picture with real pearls and precious stones, these embellishments being applied to the head ornaments, draperies and other ornamental accessories. Several uses were made of water only, without the admixture of colour, this method being referred to as *abina*. For instance, a sketch was sometimes drawn in with a brush charged with pure water only ; when dry, this leaves a watermark impression which act as a guide for future work. A very delicate shade is said to have been obtained by the Kashmiri painters, who allowed water to stand until it had completely evaporated, thus depositing a slight sediment. This sediment was then used as a background tint to faces, and gave a faint but very charming tone to the picture. Water was, of course, the principal medium through which all the pigments were applied, but with this certain fixatives were mixed, such as gum, glue, sugar (*gur*) and linseed water. Although painting on plaster or paper is the ordinary process employed by the Indian artist, a certain amount of painting on cloth or canvas appears to have been executed at different times. The Emperor Humayun commissioned for his State Library a stupendous copy of the *Hāmzā Nāmāh*, executed on cotton cloth, many pages of which are still to be seen in European museums. Other pictures on cloth have been occasionally forthcoming, but it is apparent the art in this form never found greater favour in India. As far as oil painting is concerned this medium was not generally appreciated, and it is chronicled that the Emperor Jehangir, being shown two European pictures, summarily rejected one, because being 'in oyle he liked it not.' Examples of an oil medium being occasionally come to light, notably in Southern India, but all of these pictures are traceable to Occidental influence.

The modern school of painting, in the form of the New

Indian Art movement, produces its effects in a rather unusual method of water-colour. The paper employed is a good quality of 'cartridge,' which is not stretched or mounted, but is merely placed loosely on a drawing board. The subject is first sketched in with pencil, and then the somewhat laborious process of painting begins. European pigments are ordinarily utilised, but efforts have been made to revive the ancient palette of the Rajput and Mughal artists, with some success. Outlining the drawing by means of a brown colour, the artist then proceeds to wash on his general scheme, alternately washing down and glazing until eventually he secures the effect desired. During this process the outline drawing is every now and again emphasised and picked out with a fine brush, but the soft harmonious result is mainly produced by repeated applications of colour, washed down and then glazed, this process being continued until the requisite colour scheme is obtained. Details and accessories are touched in with white and gold, after which the picture is complete. This method, or variations of it, is the one usually employed, but some of the more versatile members of the school have their own special technique, such as painting on a gilt ground or in white on a tinted paper, which need no special reference.

APPENDIX

LIST OF INDIAN PIGMENTS

White ... A native lead (cerusite) from Kashgar.

Black ... Lampblack (*kajal*) ; it is generally collected from earthen shades or reeds placed over burning oil lamps.

Red ... Indian red (*hurmachi*) and red ochre (*geru*) are both oxides of iron found plentifully in Jabalpur. Very useful pigments.

Vermilion ... Crude cinnabar (*shaugarf*).

Lake ... Prepared from lac.

Blues ... Ultramarine from powdered lapis-lazuli (*lajward*) ; indigo (*nil*).

Yellows ... Orpiment, a sulphide of arsenic (*hartel*) ; a soft saponaceous earth (*Multani mutti*) ; Indian yellow, euxanthonate of magnesium (*peori*) ; extract of the flowers of the *dhak*, butea frondosa (*nakli peori*).

Greens ... Powdered verdigris (*jangal, zangar*) ; indigo and orpiment ; for olive green (*vesce*) ; mung green (mung being the pasiolus mungo) ; water-melon green (*tarbuzi*) ; various proportions of lampblack, orpiment, and indigo are used. The beautiful terra-verte underglaze of the Buddhist paintings appears to have been obtained from an earth which is silicate of protoxide of iron ; this colour is known as *sang sapz*.

Purples ... Vermilion and indigo mixed ; a dark purple was obtained by mixing lampblack and *hormuzi*, the latter being a brownish ochre found in the island of Hormuz, in the Persian Gulf.

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PRINCIPAL COLLECTIONS OF INDIAN PAINTINGS

Public Collections

India—

Indian Museum, Calcutta. (Generally representative collection.)
Victoria Memorial Collection, Calcutta. (Mainly historical.)
State Library, Rampur.
State Library, Jaipur.
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.
Khuda Buksh Library, Bankipur. (Largely illustrative.)
Central Museum, Lahore. (Representative collection, but specialises in historical portraiture.)
Museum of Archæology, Delhi. (Historical portraits.)
Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, Punjab. (Portraits and mythological subjects in the Kangra *kalm*.)
School of Arts, Madras. (Small but interesting series of portraits, in the style of the South of India.)
Palace of Tanjore } Portraits in the Southern Indian style.
Palace of Pudukottah }
The Nahar Collection, Calcutta.

London—

British Museum. (Miscellaneous.)
Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. (Miscellaneous.)
India Office. (Miscellaneous.)

Oxford—

Bodleian Library.

Continent—

Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. (Large collection of miscellaneous paintings.)
Ethnographical Museum, Berlin.
Bibliotheque de Petrograd.
Musee Asiatique de Petrograd.
Imperial Library, Vienna.

America—

Metropolitan, Museum, New York.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Field Columbian Museum, Chicago.
National Museum, Washington.

Private Collections

India—

His Highness the Maharaja of Burdwan.
His Highness the Maharaja of Benares.
His Highness the Newab of Rampur.
Mr. G. N. Tagore, Calcutta.
Babu Sitaram Lal, Benares.
Mr. P. C. Manuk, Bankipur.
Mr. J. C. French, I.C.S.
Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis, Satara.

England—

Sir Hercules Reed.
Mrs. Jopling Rowe.
Col. Hendley, C.I.E.
Prof. Rothenstein.
Mr. Dyson Perrins.

Paris—

M. Goulebeff.
M. Cartier.
Baron Maurice Rothschild.
M. Vever.
M. Vignier.
M. Marteau.

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